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MANITOBA AND THE NORTH WEST TERRITORIES

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LETTERS BY

JAMES TROW M.P.

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MANITOBA

AND

NORTH WEST TERRITORIES.

LETTERS

BY

JAMES TROW, M.P.,
(Chairman of Immigration and Colonization Committee.)

TOGETHER WITH

INFORMATION RELATIVE TO ACQUIRING DOMINION LANDS; COST OF OUTFIT, &c.

OTTAWA:
PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.
1878.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following letters from Mr. TROW, M.P., the Chairman of the Committee of Immigration and Colonization of the House of Commons, addressed, in the first place, to a local paper, for the special benefit of his own constituents, have been reprinted by the Department of Agriculture, for the information of intending settlers.

Mr. TROW made this journey for the express purpose of satisfying himself as to the adaptability of Manitoba and the adjoining territory as a field for immigration. His aim was, in writing these letters, to convey, without any exaggeration or undue colouring, his honest impressions. And he is, it may be added, a perfectly competent and responsible observer of the facts he narrates.

In order to add to the usefulness of this pamphlet, a summary of the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act is given; together with some information respecting land scrip; the cost of outfit necessary for a settler to commence farming; and fares.

Ottawa, April, 1878.

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LETTERS OF TRAVEL

IN THE NORTH-WEST.

BY MR. TROW, M.P.

(*From the Stratford Beacon.*)

LETTER I.

En Route for the Far West—Sketches by the Way—Changes and Progress.

DULUTH, JULY 11, 1877.

ACCORDING to promise I intend to occupy a short space occasionally in the *Beacon*, for the purpose of keeping my numerous friends in the County of Perth informed respecting Manitoba and the great North-West. I shall take jottings daily by the way, descriptive of the country travelled through, and shall relate, without colouring, a true and reliable statement of the resources of the Far West—and its adaptability for successful colonization. With the various subjects that come under my notice, I shall deal without fear or favour, and give an unvarnished account of the country I pass through.

Leaving Stratford on the evening of the 8th inst., accompanied by my son, (we had, also, for a considerable portion of our journey, Col. Richardson, Stipendiary Magistrate for the North-West Territory, and his family, for fellow-travellers), we proceeded to Sarnia and took passage on the steamer *Ontario*, of the North-West Transportation Company. We left very late at night and arrived at Goderich harbour at 7.30 the following morning, distance 60 miles. The docks have been very much improved since my last visit. The river Maitland has been diverted through a new channel on the west side of the bay, and the harbour will now be free from ice and *debris* brought down by the spring freshets. I noticed across the bay large piles of lumber, probably some millions of feet, shipped from the Georgian Bay, by the Messrs. Cook & Co. This lumber is forwarded from this point by either rail or water to all parts east. I also

noticed another branch of industry recently sprung up, the mammoth flouring mills of Messrs. Ogilvie & Co. These occupy a splendid site alongside the dock, having an elevator lifting the grain out of the boats into the mill. This mill contains 11 run of stones, and can grind 2,000 bushels per day. The firm depend entirely upon Western wheat, purchased in Chicago, Milwaukee, or St. Paul. I noticed a cargo then unloading, some 15,000 bushels, a poor shrunken sample of Minnesota wheat. The manager said they mixed it with better Canadian grain and had adopted the "Talent" process, which made the best flour. Attached to the flouring mills are extensive salt works, the steam from the flour mill being utilized for evaporating the brine. I was informed by the foreman that the expense was very trifling, not exceeding $1.25 per ton, and that no other well could compete with them, the result being that nearly all the other wells were shut down, and Ogivie & Co. monopolize the salt trade in Goderich.

Proceeding up the lake we soon enterthe Kincardine harbour, and a short sail further brings us to Southampton, another small town. The docks are distant nearly a mile from the town. Very large sums have been expended by the Government on these docks or breakwaters. One extends out 2,300 feet and the other 2,100 feet. The officials of the steamer had but a poor opinion of the harbour notwithstanding all the money expended on it, deeming their ship safer in a storm out in the lake than in the harbour. Southampton appears to be quite a fishing station, thirty or forty fishing smacks being employed in the fishing trade. The proceeds for last year amounted to $60,000.

Next morning we sight the Manitoulin, a much larger island than I had anticipated, being probably 80 miles in length. It formerly belonged to the Chippewas; but Sir Francis Bond Head, in 1836, collected the remnants of several tribes, some even from the United States, who settled on the Island, and in 1862 a treaty was made with them, by which a large portion of the Island was ceded to the Canadian Government and placed upon the market at 50 cents per acre. About the year 1867 the price was reduced to 20 cents, and in 1870 raised again to 50 cents. The population of the Island now is supposed to be about 5,000, composed of 3,500 whites and 1,500 Indians. About a dozen townships have been surveyed, roads constructed, municipal institutions formed, schools and churches erected. Settlers are taking up land rapidly, and in a few years all the arable land will be taken up. Passing several islands we touch at the Island of St. Joseph, where we landed a few passengers at a very primitive dock. Many settlers are taking up land in this region. Free grants are here given to settlers. The land is reported good and well adapted for successful settlement. Running

through several intricate channels we soon enter St. Mary's River, and in a few hours arrive at the Sault.

The town appears to have a gradual growth, and I am informed that roads are being constructed in the back townships, and that settlers are rapidly filling in and taking possession of the lands adapted for agriculture. No doubt a good proportion of the lands is unfit for settlement, but that portion will eventually develop great mining resources. The St. Mary's ship canal does not appear to be any further advanced than it was on my visit in 1874. The new lock is 80 feet wide and 500 in length. The Indians in this locality have a sickly look, probably owing to their habits of life. They occupy their time in fishing under the Falls, carrying excursionists over the rapids in bark canoes, and lounging along the docks. Having passed through the canal, we enter Lake Superior, the great inland sea, having an area of 32,000 square miles, more than double the size of the Province of Manitoba. Steaming ore this broad expanse of water scarcely a vessel is sighted; and it appears that at present the shipping interests are much depressed. I am informed that wheat can now be carried from Chicago to Buffalo for 1¾c. or 2 cts. per bushel, and from Duluth to Sarnia at 4 cts. per bushel. Hundreds of people who were considered wealthy a few years ago, whose means were invested in shipping, now find themselves in straitened circumstances. What then represented a dollar is not worth one-third of that now. Sighting Isle Royale on our left, the manager of a mine on it informed me there was no good land; and that it was very doubtful if mineral interests would pay for working. We next arrive at Silver Islet, the most profitable silver mine in the world for a time. This island is a mere speck, 70 or 80 feet square, distant from the shore 3,000 or 4,000 yards; yet from this little island probably two millions of dollars in silver have already been extracted, at an outlay of one million dollars. Breakwaters have been made, shafts sunk, and precious metal taken out many hundred feet below the water. A village of considerable size sprang up as if by magic, on the shore just opposite, but it is now deserted for a time at least. When litigation ceases with the company and stock is concentrated and held by a few this mine may yet flourish. A large number of the miners removed to Manitoba, where they will no doubt find that it is safer and more profitable to work on the surface than under ground. Passing Thunder Cape, towering 1,350 feet almost perpendicularly, out of the water, we cross the bay and arrive at Prince Arthur's Landing. Quite a rivalry exists between the people of this place and those at Fort William in reference to the terminus of the Pacific Railway. Efforts are now on foot to construct a branch line from the Landing to the terminus, some 7 or 8 miles. They fully expect the Government to

furnish the rails, and it appears reasonable to suppose that a place of so much importance, and possessed of so much enterprise, should be encouraged to that extent. The mining interests of Thunder Bay are, like many other branches of business, languishing for want of capital to develop them. Scores were out of employment last winter and, but for the work on the Railway, many of them would have been in want of the necessaries of life. Leaving the Landing we proceed on our way to Duluth, 190 or 200 miles distant. The whole shore seems rugged and uninviting. Not a solitary settler is to be seen. We only noticed two or three small shanties along the whole coast, and those were the winter store-houses for the mail carriers with dog trains who travel those dreary wastes in the depth of winter, and, being frequently over a month on the trip, feed themselves and dogs principally upon fish stored up for their use before winter sets in. Before arriving at Duluth, the passengers presented an address to Captain Robertson and officers for their kind and courteous conduct during the trip. The steamer *Ontario* is certainly a good safe boat, and the accomodation all that could be desired. In entering the harbour of Duluth, the passengers get a full view of the whole city, which is situated on the hill side, having a southern slope nicely sheltered from the north winds. The harbour is protected by a narrow strip of land seven or eight miles across the bay. This strip is not over 80 or 100 feet in width, composed of gravel and sand, formed by opposing currents, the raging St. Louis in its feeble efforts battling against the great inland sea. We enter the harbour by a ship canal 250 feet wide. The dock accommodation is on a gigantic scale, and the harbour dredged at an enormous expense, 16 feet in depth. Along the docks we find elevators with a storage capacity of 400,000 bushels, capable of loading 20 cars per hour. The accomodation is splendid; large freight houses and the cars and boats are brought very conveniently together. The inhabitants of Duluth are principally from the Eastern States, with a considerable sprinkling of Scandinavians and Germans. At the height of its glory the city contained 7,000 of a population, but it is now reduced to 2,000. Fabulous fortunes were lost and gained. The city sprang up as if by magic. Mansions were erected on the hill-side, coasting from $30,000 to $50.000. Lots were sold at from $100 to $200 per foot frontage. A small lot adjoining the "Clark Hotel" was sold for $10,000, the proprietor afterwards expending $2,000 in cellarage and foundation for a grand block; but a crash came, and the lot was sold for taxes. Taxation is oppressive, and the debt of the city is enormous, for its means and population. But it is expected the General Government will relieve it of a large proportion of the debt; more particularly that portion expended in harbour construction. Many places of business are leased for payment of the taxes, scores

of tenements are empty and have become dilapidated. Many of the business men are, however, sanguine that, phœnix-like, it will yet rise from its ashes and throw Chicago into the shade. A great drawback is the unproductiveness of the surrounding country and the absence of any manufacturing industry. Speculation can never make a city or town.

Superior City, another mushroom place, is entirely on its "beam ends." 160 lots that were considered value for from $100 to $300 per lot a few years ago, were yesterday sold by auction for $150, and I understand without any incumbrance thereon. What a change! Scores of men are out of employment and have no means to carry them away, and all this change and destitution in a country with unbounded resources, and every branch of industry so carefully protected. The Dominion Government have an agent at this place during the season of navigation to see to the care of emigrants for Manitoba and the North-West; and the fine building of the Northern Pacific Railway Company is placed at his disposal at a merely nominal rental.

LETTER II.

Arrival at Winnipeg—Pencillings by the Way—The Scenery—Navigating Red River—Sailing under Difficulties—Manitoba as a Field for Immigration—The Soil—Progress and Development of the Country, &c., &c.

WINNIPEG, JULY 30, 1877.

Having satisfied our curiosity, viewing the scenery in and around Duluth, which sprang up as if by magic under the wand of Jay Cooke, and collapsed like a pierced balloon according to the prediction of John Proctor Knott, we took the Northern Pacific to Glyndon. For a few miles the line passes through a marshy tract; the river deposits of centuries. Passing Fond du Lac, a small place, the head-quarters of the company's workshops for the eastern section of the line, and proceeding westward, we pass through a mountainous country. Here the interesting scenery commences, and as many of the passengers as could crowd upon the platform were outside, while others were straining their necks gazing out of the windows at the wild and rocky country we pass through. The mountain torrents have cut out deep ravines, over which bridges of enormous height are carried on trestle work. On our left the raging St. Louis was seen dashing and foaming against the rocks

which have been by some volcanic eruption all placed on their edge, as it were the more effectually to resist the impetuous torrent. Arriving at Thomson Junction, passengers change cars for St. Paul.

For fully 100 miles the line runs through the most uninviting country imaginable, which seems to be totally unadapted either for pasture or crop raising. Crossing the Mississippi over a new bridge recently constructed in place of the former one that fell about a year ago, while a freight train was crossing it, we arrive at Brainard, a pretty place built in the woods or natural pine groves. The railway company make this their head-quarters, and have lavishly expended money in erecting station buildings, offices, workshops, etc. From Brainard to Glyndon we pass over vast prairie lands and cross occasional streams. This section is sparsely settled. Glyndon is a new station, which has sprung up at the junction of the St. Paul and St. Vincent roads and the Northern Pacific. The gap between Breckenridge and Brainard is now being rapidly pushed towards completion, hundreds of men being employed, and it is expected the line will be completed in a few months.* The railway companies have succeeded in inducing many to locate along the line. A free passage is granted to intending settlers. The lands are sold from $5 to $8 per acre, according to situation, and eleven years' credit given at seven per cent. interest. Many pay the first instalment, forfeit their claim, then leave and procure a more favourable location elsewhere. Notwithstanding the restrictions imposed and the high price of land, thousands are yearly settling along the line in Minnesota and Dacotah. Much better would it be for intending settlers if they would proceed further west to the rich land along the Red River, where any person, male or female, the head of a family, or any young man who has attained the age of 18 years, is entitled to a free grant of 160 acres, and an additional 160 acres adjoining for $1 per acre with three years' credit. After a delay of an hour, while the baggage was changed and a number of freight cars attached loaded with iron rails for the portage at Grand Rapids, between Lake Winnipeg and the navigable waters of the Saskatchewan, for the Hudson Bay Company's service, we proceeded over a desolate prairie as level as a barn floor. In many places the railway track is covered with water, the ditches being all filled to overflowing. This road was easily constructed, there being no grades, and the ditches for miles not over a foot in depth. Passing Crookstown we arrive at the terminus of the line, Fisher's Landing, situate on Red Lake River, 75 miles from Glyndon. Owing to continuous rains the river had overflowed its banks. Many of the

* This line is now completed, and very much shortens the all-rail route *vid* St. Paul, between the old Provinces and Manitoba.

hotels and places of business were partially submerged, some small tenements had been entirely swept away, and others were anchored to trees with chains and ropes, the occupants, like rats, either abandoning the house or removing to the upper story. Since this line of road was opened, a swarm of blacklegs and gamblers, who had decoyed hundreds of dupes at Moorhead, took up their quarters here. We were met at the Landing by numbers whose outfit was scarcely adapted for the sitting-room, and whose persons soap or water hadn't touched for many days. Leaving this repulsive place, we take the *Manitoba*, a steamboat belonging to the Kittson Line, and proceed on our way down the crookedest navigable river probably on this or any other continent. There is scarcely a quarter of a mile of straight stretch for a distance of 80 miles. Many of the curves are at right angles, and in navigating this serpentine stream the steamer runs against the bank, stems the current, puts on steam, gains a point, tries again and frequently makes several unsuccessful attempts before getting round the curves. The captain told us the distance from Fisher's Landing to Grand Forks by land was 12 miles and by water 70 or 80. Late in the evening we arrive at Grand Forks, Dacotah, at the confluence of Red Lake River and the Red River. The situation is certainly a fine one, elevated 30 or 40 feet above high water mark on the prairie; and there is already a lively little town, which must increase surrounded as it is by a rich agricultural country. The waters are high in many places, and overflow their banks, which makes the trip down the river much more pleasant. From the deck of the steamer the surrounding country is seen over the brush and timber that skirt the river. We are driven to our beds early by swarms of mosquitoes and black flies. The following morning it was delightful to pace the deck owing to the freshness of the air, the rising sun throwing its bright tints upon the waters and the steamer steering down the serpentine stream to all points of the compass. In due time we reach Pembina, a United States fort, which was considered the boundary, but the commissioners have established the line a mile further north at a little place called West Lynn on one side, and Emerson on the other. In all probability we have obtained our just rights in establishing this boundary; but as a rule in all former treaties we have been "euchred" out of much valuable territory. At West Lynn we were subjected to an examination of our effects by a custom-house official. However, we are not detained long as no contraband articles were found. A reserve of two townships on the boundary was granted to Mr. Emerson for the purpose of settlement, but failing to carry out his agreement he forfeited the grant; but was allowed to purchase the land at $1 per acre. Town lots are selling well, and to all appearance considerable business is

springing up. The lands on the south side, West Lynn, are much higher, and the Pembina Mountains have attracted a large portion of settlers this season. There is a very large Mennonite settlement some 20 miles distant, and West Lynn will attract a large proportion of the trade of this section. The soil of the whole surrounding country is richly covered with nutritious grasses. Many copses of timber skirt the river, and at the Pembina Mountains timber is plentiful and living springs abundant. Where the lands are high the crops have a fine healthy appearance, but on low lands the unusual fall of rain has done considerable damage. A short distance further down the river we arrive at Dufferin, where buildings were erected for the boundary commission and afterwards transferred to the Immigration Department. Many poor families find relief in being provided for and allowed to remain within the buildings until they secure a location and some place of shelter. We met here Mr. J. E. Tétu, Dominion Immigration Agent, who appears very active in assisting and locating those desirous of becoming permanent settlers. Some 500 or more repatriated French Canadians from Massachusetts have been located on a reserve in this locality, having been forwarded to this point by Mr. Lalime, Dominion Immigration Agent for the Eastern States. These French settlers were placed upon the reserve by Dr. Tremblay and Mr. Tétu. Further down the river we run against the bank and take in a supply of wood sufficient for the return trip to this point. Speculators purchase this wood from the Indians in winter, while they are undergoing partial starvation, for a mere trifle, and dispose of it for $2.50 per cord to supply the boats. Thousands of cords are taken down to the city in barges and rafts. Government lands are totally stripped of their valuable timber by the Indians and others; and the lands reduced materially in value, for the settler cannot be induced to undertake to clear up stumps while the broad open prairie can be had for a song. Timber lands are valuable, and should be carefully watched and preserved. It is very true that the Mennonites are satisfied with but little timber; nine-tenths of their reserves are totally destitute of it; but all Canadians are anxious to settle upon lands on which some timber is to be obtained. Continuing to sail down the river, we noticed that a considerable number of streams enter it, having their rise far inland, affording drainage and water privilege to the intending settler. The river frontage on both sides is principally settled by French half-breeds, who as a rule make very indifferent agriculturists, preferring trading and hunting to tilling the soil. Scores of eligible locations with ordinary buildings and a few acres under cultivation could be purchased upon reasonable terms. More productive lands cannot be found in the Dominion. The best analysis of the quality of the

soil is when we find that under such indifferent farming, crops of wheat averaging from 25 to 35 bushels per acre are raised yearly, for 20 or 30 years in succession. Early on Sunday morning we arrived at the city of Winnipeg, the great centre to which all resort for their annual supplies, coming from the numerous settlements even as far as the Saskatchewan and the base of the Rocky Mountains, and in the opposite direction from the north-west angle of Rainy River, to the settlements on the west side of Lake Winnipeg. The city occupies a commanding position at the confluence of the two great rivers, Red River and the Assiniboine. Numerous brick blocks and public buildings have been erected since my visit in 1874 —the Hudson Bay Company's offices, Pacific hotel, the Custom house, Dominion land office, post office, the city hall, and many extensive stores and costly private dwellings. Its growth, notwithstanding the grasshopper plague for three years, has continued; the population in 1871 being estimated at 700, and at present at upwards of 8,000. Proprietors of land have surveyed and subdivided their lots, which are sold and resold at almost fabulous prices. Lots that were offered to myself in 1874 for from $300 to $500 are now selling readily for $600 and $1,000. The principal streets are Main st. and Portage st., each 132 feet in width; the other streets radiating from these centres are 66 feet. The sewerage scheme, which cost nearly $50,000, adds very materially to the health of the inhabitants. Extensive tanks are sunk at the corners of many streets as means for extinguishing fire. Several grist and saw mills are now in full blast in the city and country. Steamboats are constantly plying up the river to Portage la Prairie and down the river to Selkirk. The Kittson steamers run regularly to Fisher's Landing, and an independent line is soon expected to commence running from Moorehead. The Red River is navigable for over 650 miles excepting in dry season. At Goose Rapids, above Grand Forks, the American Government have recently made appropriations for improving these rapids. On my arrival I made particular enquiries respecting the state of the roads and prospects of crops. Many "Job's comforters" alleged that the roads were utterly impassable and the entire crop destroyed. After a few dry days I drove out in various directions, and found the roads comparatively dry and passable, and the general crops luxuriant and presenting a most healthy appearance. It is very true crops on low lands were injured and also some root crops destroyed, but on the whole the prospects are exceedingly good. Large droves of cattle have just been brought in from Minnesota and Montana, and the city sheds are filled every night. The drovers find it much better in order to effect a sale to enclose their cattle and horses every night, paying $1 per night for the pen. Hundreds of horses are brought for sale, and a good hardy breed they are, much

better adapted for the country than horses taken from Ontario. Good cows and oxen can be purchased much cheaper than in any of the older Provinces New settlers can get stock and all agricultural implements in Winnipeg much cheaper and more serviceable than by bringing them with them. The trade of the city is enormous for its size, and is yearly increasing. Many firms are doing a business estimated at from $150,000 to $200,000 per annum. A ready market is found for all surplus products at remunerative prices. The large annual immigration will consume a good deal of the surplus farm produce, but immediate facilities should be provided for ingress and egress by rail. The Pembina branch is already graded, and the ties and rails on hand should be laid at once. This would no doubt stimulate our neighbours to finish the gap between Fisher's Landing and the boundary. Communication over the Northern Pacific would thus become quite an acquisition to Manitoba. The charter held by the old company expires shortly, and a new company is organized, or about to be. Should they obtain a charter, they are ready to construct the road at once. We should have no scruples in using American lines of railway to reach market. The Americans do not hesitate to use Canadian roads. The Canada Southern and Great Western are in constant use by the Americans. I believe it would have been to our advantage had the Government or a Canadian company years ago leased the Northern Pacific and constructed this road to Winnipeg. We hold undisturbed possession of the Portland branch of the Grand Trunk, and could have so managed matters as to have had the management of this line of road for the next half century. This great wheat-producing country will require two lines to carry the enormous yield of grain to market. In a few years Manitoba and the Great North-West will be the grain producing portion of the Dominion. Mr. Whitehead, the contractor, is pushing his work under great disadvantage. Even during the wet weather he kept his men together at considerable expense to himself. Had the season been favourable scores who came out with very limited means, anxious to settle in the province, would have been employed by Mr. Whitehead on the Pembina branch and its extension and on section 15 of the Pacific Railway, or under Messrs. Sifton & Farewell on section 14, but many returned without ever leaving the city to look for work, the roads at the time being almost impassable. These people left disappointed, and with an unfavourable opinion of the resources of this great Province. However, the prospects are encouraging. Grasshoppers have not been seen for two or three years, and are not likely to appear again for a long period, if ever; and, should the present crop be safely harvested, all who remain will be amply rewarded by getting ready employment and the chances of settling upon their future homes. It behoves the

Dominion Government to push forward the Pembina branch to completion so that our portion of the line may be opened and ready for traffic simultaneously with the American line, and that next Dominion Day we may have the great pleasure of celebrating the opening of this great outlet to other portions of the Dominion.

The Pacific Railway should also be pushed with equal energy, at least from Fort William to the junction at Selkirk. It is certainly a difficult road to construct, with great rock cuttings and engineering difficulties, but the Government have undertaken the work and should accomplish it as early as practicable. Supposing the Red River was not crossed at Selkirk, the Pembina extension could be utilized for years to St. Boniface. A bridge boat or ferry could be constructed across the Red River to Winnipeg, and a charter granted to a company to construct an independent line south of Lake Manitoba, running through the heart of the best settled portions of the province, taking a curve near Totogon and connecting with the great Pacific at Livingston or Fort Pelly, evading the Riding Mountains and deep ravines that carry the freshets into the Assiniboine. The prosecution of these public works would increase the population, would induce thousands to remove to the province who would, after the works were completed, find it to their interest to become permanent settlers; and thus become producers as well as consumers, and contribute to the wealth of the Dominion. Manufacturing interests must soon develop themselves. Scores of reapers and mowers and other agricultural implements are leaving the city daily. Mostly all this trade is now monopolized by manufacturers in Minnesota. Much superior articles are manufactured in Ontario and could be sold at a much cheaper rate were it not for the high discriminating freight rates. The opening of the Pembina branch will reduce the rates one-half at least, but the opening of the Pacific Railway will give all this trade to our own people. Millions of dollars are thrown into the lap of our neighbours for want of this outlet. Railway facilities will advance the value of property rapidly, and thousands would at once be induced to settle in this great country in preference to the saline and almost rainless region west of Dacotah in the United States. I am of opinion that in a few years a large influx to our population will flow in from the Western States.

LETTER III.

The Prairie Province as a Field for Colonization.

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 3, 1877.

My last communication was descriptive of Red River transportation, the appearance of the river settlements and the progress and prosperity of the city of Winnipeg. I shall in this describe what is doing towards settling up the country. Upon enquiry from reliable parties, who are conversant with the facts of the case, I am informed that a very large proportion of those who intend to remain in the Province took up homesteads directly from the Department. From the 1st January up to 20th June, 1877, there were:

Homesteads issued at the Land Office	342
Pre-emptions	215
Sales direct at the office	445
Warrants	42
Total number of homesteads	1,050

representing 163,940 acres of land. Since that date the returns have not been received from some of the agencies, but it is safe to say that a much larger number of acres have been disposed of. During the year in all probability half a million of acres will change hands. The present crops having a splendid appearance will induce quite an influx to the Province before the winter sets in. Many have settled near Pembina, or what is usually called Pembina Mountain.

A large tract of land in that locality is rolling or undulating, with considerable timber groves and water easy to be procured. Other lands equally as fertile and more convenient to market were overlooked, owing to the unusual wet weather, as not desirable. Many moved to the western limits of the Province, others located themselves out at the Little Saskatchewan and the Riding Mountains. We found that speculators who had calculated upon reaping a great harvest from intending settlers were much disappointed; not as much scrip changed hands as they anticipated. Ever since the scrip was in the market speculators have had a mania for land; many have taken out of their legitimate business all available funds; some have drawn heavily from the banks and invested every dollar they had or could command. Failing to sell as readily as they anticipated, some no doubt find themselves in an embarrassing position, and are prepared to sell scrip or half-breed claims at much lower figures than could be obtained earlier in the season. Many settlers who are in possession of some means prefer to procure im-

proved farms bordering on either the Red River or the Assiniboine from half-breeds. The French half-breeds are as a rule not successful agriculturists, being more inclined to trading and hunting. They are very hospitable, social, light-hearted and merry, they prefer a roving life, and are very anxious to sell their eligible locations at reduced prices. The Scotch half-breeds cling with greater tenacity to their homes, and if possible enlarge their limits, but the old Selkirk families have little under cultivation. Many have only 20 or 30 acres under crop, from which they cut enormous quantities of hay and raise horses and cattle.

The half-breed settlement, bordering on the Red River and Assiniboine, is a strip of land extending four miles on each side of the river, and subdivided into very inconvenient narrow strips, averaging from six to ten chains in length and having a depth of four miles. Some six chain lots are further subdivided into two or three chains, resembling a street. The original surveys or allotments were two miles in depth with the privilege of cutting hay on the outer two miles, but some years ago Parliament committed a great blunder in granting the half-breeds the outer two miles. The sectional survey was destroyed, municipalities, school sections and roads were not so easily established, and, besides, miles of the farms running parallel with the river will not be brought under cultivation. By offering some inducements, several adjoining farms can be bought, and, through culture, made comfortable homesteads. All these river lots are desirable, the land is of unbounded fertility, and with a proper system of farming would produce abundantly. The Province of Manitoba contains about 9,000,000 acres, or 14,000 square miles, divided into 360 townships. A very large portion of this Province is set apart by reservations of various kinds which retard its progress and development seriously. I am persuaded that hundreds of intending settlers will not remain in the Province on account of these reserves. Leaving the settled portions and passing through the reserves for miles to the new settlements, without roads, cannot but be very discouraging. 1,400,000 acres of the most eligible locations in the Province were set apart for the half-breeds; 1,900,000 acres for the railway reserve; 500,000 acres for the Mennonites; several townships for Indians and repatriated French Canadians. Then there is the Hudson Bay reserve of one-twentieth of the whole, or 450,000 acres; and there are sections 11 and 29 in each township for educational purposes and Indian reserves. Many of these reservations are not for the interest of the Province, and must and will retard legitimate colonization, unless thrown open for settlement. Bringing into market the half-breed reserves is a step in the right direction. Under the Act 33 Vic., Cap. 3 and Orders in Council, half-breed lands have been allotted in

Portage la Prairie, and the parishes of St. John, St. Paul, Kildonan, Headingly and several others, which are now undergoing allotment. Under the Act each half-breed is entitled to 240 acres within the limits of this reservation. The numbers of families and each member of a family in each parish are taken, and the lands in that parish drawn by lot. The schedule issued from the Department contains the name of the allottee, the date of birth, number of township and range, and also the description of the land allotted in legal subdivision. Hundreds place but little value upon their rights to these reserves, and when in straitened circumstances sell them for a mere nominal sum, frequently bartering their lands for a horse or merchandise, and in some instances for alcoholic liquors. Providing the allotments are not made, they are so anxious to sell that they dispose of their undivided portion of the 1,400,000 acres, and enter into bonds to convey to the purchaser all their claim and interest. Many execute a deed to the purchaser, leaving out the description, and giving the purchaser the power of attorney to fill in the description when the allotments are made. It is alleged that some who have sold their land for a much less sum than they considered its value, or less than others had received for similar claims, sell several times, and when the allotments are made and the description known and ascertained, the speculators interested proceed immediately to the registry office and record their respective claims, the first on record, as a matter of course, being the successful party. It is to the interest of the registrar to give as little information as possible. The fees for registration are fully 100 per cent. higher than those in Ontario. Those who come out second best, *minus* their lands, console themselves that, providing they lose one claim out of a number, they are amply remunerated by the sale of others. Criminal proceedings are not often taken against the assignee. He may have removed to the Rocky Mountains or outside the limits of the Province. Half-breed scrip unallotted is rated at $90; two months ago it readily sold for $115, and even $120. When the allotments are known many are good value for $3 to $5 per acre. Some are valueless muskegs, but, generally speaking, the whole reserve is worth at least $1 per acre. Most of the land is adapted for the raising of crops of good hay land; even low prairies are easily drained, providing there is a fall at a reasonabledistance. The soil is porous, so that a small ditch, or even a furrow, will clean itself and enlarge its limits from time to time and carry or draw away the surplus water from a much larger area than in Ontario. Many purchase from minors, frequently running the risk that the assignee will execute to them when he is 18 years of age a legal title to the claim. Others, more cautious, get the parents of the minors to enter into bonds that the minor will carry

out the contract when he attains his majority or legal age. The French half-breeds bear the reputation of being honest, and in most cases, unless they have been defrauded or imposed upon, carry out to the letter what they undertake. There are various descriptions of scrip available and offered for sale, among them, soldiers' land warrants granted to them for military services, and scrip given for services in the Mounted Police. These are all assignable and easily transferred. The holder is entitled to 160 acres of land of his own selection on any unsold Dominion lands, and the scrip is always accepted at the Land Office as so much cash. Scrip is also issued to half-breed heads of families and old settlers. No assignment is necessary to transfer any kind of scrip. The bearer is acknowledged to be the owner, and accepted at the office at all times as such. Very many take free grant homesteads. Every male or female, the head of a family, or any male who has attained the age of 18 years, is entitled to be entered for one quarter section, and may also enter for an adjoining quarter section unclaimed and take a pre-emption claim on it for one dollar per acre at three years' credit, the title remaining in the crown until the patent is issued. Homesteads are not liable to be taken in execution before the issuing of the patent. Any settler relinquishing his or her claim, or who has been absent from the land for six months in any one year, without leave from the Minister of the Interior, forfeits the claim, which may be cancelled and the lot opened to fresh entry. How much better for the poor man to procure a homestead on lands that are so rich and productive for nothing, than purchasing from railway companies in Dacotah, Nebraska or Kansas at from $3 to $10 an acre! No country to my knowledge presents more favourable advantages to the poor man or to manufacturers or capitalists. In a very short time there will be railway communication to Duluth or Fort William, or both. Competing lines will be open for freight, to connect with the great chain of lakes and water stretches to the seaboard, or direct to St. Paul, Chicago, and all places by rail. These fertile lands are so easily cultivated, no stones, stumps, or other obstructions to interrupt ploughing, while for stock-raising the country is unequalled in the Dominion. There is abundance of rich, productive land, yielding the finest quality of wheat, averaging from 25 to 30 bushels per acre, and frequently much higher. Oats yield from 50 to 60 bushels; barley from 40 to 50. Roots grow to an enormous size, and are of very superior quality. Potatoes often weigh two pounds. Three heads of cabbage were exhibited at the last Provincial show, weighing respectively 25, 23½ and 23 lbs. Natural grasses for winter feed can be cut at very little expense at any time till frost sets in. What is most required in this Province is municipal organization and equitable taxation of the lands. The unconstitutional sys-

tem of taxing the lands of non-residents 5 cents per acre, and exempting residents, is very objectionable. A head of a family residing in one of the older Provinces may purchase a farm for his sons, who are under age, or who may not at present be in circumstances to erect suitable buildings and purchase implements of husbandry and stock. He first procures the land, calculating that his family may soon become permanent settlers, but this obnoxious tax stares him in the face annually, and, having no returns from the land, he soon becomes discouraged, and sells to speculators. I was informed that many residents in the city of Winnipeg hold from 120 to 150 half-breed claims or scrip, and thousands of acres of land patented, all of which are exempt from taxation. The true policy is to tax the property of all equitably, expend the proceeds in a proper system of drainage, in bridging and grading roads, building school-houses, and developing the resources of the country. Let the Dominion Government construct railways and improve river navigation, cut canals through portages, extend the magnificent water stretches, encourage a thrifty, industrious class of immigrants from the older Provinces, the Eastern States and from Europe, settle those fertile millions of acres not with paupers, but the farm labourers possessed of some means, and the tenant farmers of Great Britian, who pay an annual rent sufficient to purchase freeholds, erect buildings, and stock farms in Manitoba. They should also encourage manufactures. Hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly are now expended in purchasing implements, furniture and merchandise in the United States. The discriminating freight rates from St. Paul to Winnipeg, are over 100 per cent. against Canadian goods, and their effect is that our own manufacturers and merchants cannot possibly compete. The construction of railways would effectually change this system in favour of our own people. The construction of a lock on the Assiniboine, a short distance west of Winnipeg, would so improve navigation that the river could be utilized for conveying freight and passengers for hundreds of miles into the heart of the country. The water being high this season, several good-sized steamers have so far made regular weekly trips from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie. The Hudson Bay steamer, *Colvell*, makes regular trips down the Red River, along Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids, and connects with the steamer *Northcote*, one of lighter draught, which does the carrying trade for the Company up the Saskatchewan to Edmonton, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. This gives the Hudson Bay Company great advantage in conveying by water to their various posts over other traders, who cart all their supplies, taking nearly the whole season to make one trip. The frieght charges from Winnipeg to Battleford are from 7 cents to 8 cents per lb., and in some cases much higher, and, what is singular, we often find settlers bringing from Canada old traps not worth the freight.

There is something very remarkable about the navigation of Red River. At ice level the fall from the city to the crossing at Selkirk is 13 feet, and at the flood for weeks this season the water rose over 20 feet at Winnipeg, while at the crossing it rose only four feet. The fur trade overshadows all others. It is not now, as formerly, confined to the Hudson Bay Company, but scores of independent traders, with large trains, are seen almost daily going or coming into the city from the far west. The poor untutored Indian receives but a paltry pittance for his share. I understand that a few pounds of shot, flour or pork, will purchase a buffalo robe. Thousands are purchased for less than $1 each, principally in trade, the real intrinsic value of which would not represent 50c. in Ontario. I heard a trader who had just arrived from the plains say that he had brought in 4,000 robes, and had offered the entire lot at $2.50 each and could not find a purchaser. A few years ago traders from the States, and even our own traders, would take a gallon of high wines, dilute it with probably 20 gallons of water, tobacco juice, &c., and often impose upon the natives with a mixture of drugs, pepper and pain-killer, defrauding them out of valuable furs for an article that has a tendency to make them still more savage and undermine their constitutions. The law abolishing the sale of intoxicating liquors in the North-West, aided by the Mounted Police, has effectually put a check to this traffic.

Owing to the state of the roads the merchants and lumbermen are complaining of dull times, but, judging from the hundreds of Red River carts loading and unloading along the streets and warehouses, etc., I would imagine that a very extensive business was done. The hotels are overflowing with strangers; many have come for an excursion merely to see the country; others intend to invest and remain in the North-West. One gentleman shipped yesterday 600 bushels of wheat, intending to dispose of it for seed next spring. The change, no doubt, will prove advantageous.

Hotel accommodation in this city is much improved of late years.

LETTER IV.

Travelling Under Difficulties—A Rainy Season in the Prairie Province—Productiveness of the Country—Mennonite and Icelandic Settlements—Good Prospects for frugal, industrious Settlers—The Rainfall at Winnipeg, &c., &c,

The readers of the *Beacon* will, I hope, excuse my apparent negligence in not furnishing them earlier with a sketch of the continuation of my travels in Manitoba and the North West. The only apology I can offer is that I found it utterly impossible to write while under

the surgical operations of swarms of mosquitoes and "bull-dogs." (A species of fly which is extremely troublesome in the North-West is called a "bull-dog" from its persistent and determined mode of attack, armed with a weapon somewhat resembling nippers, which cut like a lance. Horses and cattle have been known to die from its attacks.) I may also state that a man has no desire to write letters at night without chairs or table, after driving mules 30 or 40 miles during the day; fording steams and wading through mud and mire, and often over 100 miles from postal communication. These and many other reasons I may advance for deferring my correspondence until a more favourable opportunity offered. Our stay in Winnipeg was protracted much beyond our expectations, in consequence of the unusual rainy season and shocking state of the roads. I regret exceedingly that so many, some of them my own personal friends and acquaintances, who went out purposely to become permanent settlers, but who, owing to the impassable state of the roads and the extortionate sums asked for conveyances, were prevented from seeing the country, returned quite discouraged. Very few got outside the city limits; it was difficult to do so. All the little ravines, water courses and low places were full to overflowing in and around the city. The judicious expenditure of a few thousand dollars in bridging and repairing the leading roads would in a great measure have removed the obstructions, and in all probability several hundreds of permanent settlers would have been added to the population. A few possessed of greater determination and more energy, did sally out and saw the promised land, with its thousands of acres of beautiful grain waving in the wind. These men, who examined for themselves, gave glowing accounts of the crops and future prospects of the country. But many returned without leaving the city, with doleful tales that the country was flooded, crops all destroyed, and the inhabitants in a way to be reduced to a state of starvation. Such accounts of this Province were widely circulated, and interested parties in the United States, speculators and the paid officials of railway companies who are in possession of large tracts of land, took up the refrain, gave the fabrication additional colouring, and advised those with whom they came in contact to remove to Manitoba because starvation was manifest, the whole country being flooded, crops all destroyed, etc., etc. Further advice was that they should go out west to the high lands bordering on the Northern Pacific or proceed to Kansas or other western territories. Many were persuaded to go and locate along the line of the Northern Pacific and purchase land at from $4 to $8 per acre while better lands were obtainable in Manitoba free. It is very true that the lands in Minnesota, Dakota, Kansas, and Montana are many hundred feet higher than these of Manitoba, but the low-

ness of our lands is an advantage, for high lands are more subject to summer droughts, arid winds and rapid evaporation. Northern latitudes are more subject to summer rains and refreshing showers than lands located further south. These showers account for the great productiveness of our soil. No one will for a moment dispute that Canada is more favourable for the successful growth of wheat, oats, barley and peas than the United States.

The last census returns show that Canada produced ⅓ as much wheat, ¼ as much oats, ⅓ as much barley, and as many peas as the thirty-four States and seven territories of the United States. The yield of wheat per acre in Manitoba, according to reliable statistics, is nearly 100 per cent. more than that of Minnesota, Dakota, or Kansas, and Minnesota returns the highest average in the Union. High temperatures without rains, such as we find in many of the western States where the thermometer ranges from 75° to 85° and upwards all summer, are not favourable to the successful growth of crops. The average summer heat in Central Ontario is 67°. 8; in Manitoba, 67°.70. Almost invariably in high temperatures (unless near the ocean or large bodies of water, which has a tendency to ameliorate the climate) there is an insufficiency of rain for vegetation. Summer droughts are prevalent, little or no rain falls during the agricultural months, the lands become baked and parched before vegetation commences, and even the prairie grasses fail to grow as luxuriantly as in a more moist climate. We also find that those arid prairies are more subject to grasshoppers. The crops in Southern Minnesota and other parts west were partially destroyed this season by the "hoppers," but none appeared in Manitoba. The evidence of Mr. James J. Hill, of St. Paul, (a gentleman who has travelled probably more extensively for the last twenty years through the western States and Territories than almost any other man), taken before the Immigration Committee at Ottawa, during last session, proves that a large number of Mennonites from Southern Russia settled in the southern part of Dakota at or about the time the same class of people settled in Manitoba; that the settlers in Dakota paid 29c. per bushel freight from their settlement (Odessa) to Duluth; that their brethren in Manitoba only paid 24c.; and that the land is not as good in Dakota as in Manitoba. Mr. Hill has been over the country, and is familiar with it, knows both countries well, and he says Dakota is more subject to visitation from locusts and more easily affected by drought than Manitoba. Mr. Hill further states that the soil in those western States is not equal to that in the Red River valley, and that such rich land cannot be found in any other place on the American continent as in Manitoba, unless it be on the Wabash, a short distance from Miami, nearly opposite St. Louis, called the Illinois bottom. Mr. Hill considers the Red River valley the richest farm-

ing land he has ever seen, and predicts for the settlers in Manitoba a bright future. Such testimony coming from an American citizen, and one so thoroughly acquainted with the country, must be considered valuable and reliable. I admit that a casual observer, who confined his sphere of observation this season to the examination of the bottom flats from Emerson to Winnipeg, and who was discouraged or had no opportunity of proceeding inland through the various flourishing settlements, could come to no favourable conclusion, but, had such observer visited Victoria settlement, Springfield, Kildonan, High Bluff, Portage la Prairie, Palestine, Boyne, or even the Mennonite settlement at Pembina, he certainly would have thought very differently respecting the future prospects of this great country. Some predicted that in the Mennonite colony the crops would prove a failure, owing to the unusally wet season, but I am gratified to know that these thrifty people have reaped an abundant harvest, and the colony will have a surplus of from 30,000 to 40,000 bushels of wheat. Canadians, and others, who settled in the Province rejected the lands now occupied by the Mennonites, owing to the scarcity of timber. The Pembina settlement embraces seventeen townships, fifteen of which are totally destitute of timber. In two townships there are poplar groves and some elm along the creeks. One township contains considerable timber adapted for building purposes—elm and oak. The whole settlement use this timber for their buildings. In forming a settlement they group together in villages, build their houses and outhouses on each side of the road, a few rods apart, in rows; they then plant rows of ornamental trees, fence in a garden and yard, the other portion of the farm being left unenclosed. They divide up four or six sections into quarters, and twenty to thirty families will comprise a village. A herder is engaged for the village who takes care of the stock, drives all out to pasture after milking, takes care of the crops during the day, and encloses the cattle in yards every night. After the buildings are erected the Mennonites require little or no timber. They construct an oven of dried clay, generally between the partitions of their dwellings, in order to heat three rooms. The oven is two feet wide, a similar depth, and six or seven feet high with metal plate inserted for baking or cooking. These ovens are heated with hay or straw in a short time. When the bricks once become heated they will keep the apartments warm a whole day. For winter use and cooking, they prepare a mixture of manure and earth cut up like turf or peat, then dry and stack it. It burns well and they say emits no offensive smell. These people number about 7,000, have thirty-eight villages on the west side of Red River and twenty-five on the other side. We occasionally find Canadians in Manitoba who are in possession of fifty or more acres of good timber and yet grumble at the scar-

city, while the Mennonites have settled upon lands without any timber which others rejected, and are contented and happy.

New settlements are forming all over the Province. Hundreds who removed to the Province a few years ago penniless are now in comfortable circumstances. They cannot help improving their positions, providing they pay proper attention to the cultivation of the soil, which will yield very abundantly. The climate is exceedingly healthy and invigorating, not subject to sudden changes as it is in other latitudes. The days are warm and the nights cool and enjoyable.

There is an Icelandic colony on the west shore of Winnipeg, stretching to Big Island, a distance of about thirty miles north of the Province of Manitoba, in the territory of Keewatin. A good winter road has been cut to connect the settlement with the road system of Manitoba. The Icelandic colony contains about 1500 settlers. They suffered very severely during the winter from an outbreak of small-pox among them, and very severe quarantine regulations, which completely isolated them from the rest of the world till the middle of the summer. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, and the total inexperience of the Icelanders of their new mode of life, the colony now appears to be fairly successful. About 200 good frame houses were put up during this season, numerous roads cut in the settlement, and the colonists have cleared from two to ten acres around their houses. Their cattle are in good order; there is excellent fishing in the Lake, and, although, owing to the quarantine restrictions, they were not able to get in their seed potatoes till June, they have, on the whole, a good crop, sufficient for the supply of the colony. The settlers are very hopeful and are, I am informed on every hand, writing letters to their friends in Iceland to join them. The settlement is called New Iceland. It is certainly very beautifully situated on Lake Winnipeg; the soil is a rick black alluvium, and it is believed offers much more favourable conditions of life than are possible to be obtained in Iceland. Many of the Icelanders have taken service in Manitoba with the farmers, and are earning good wages, and learn at once both the English language and the modes of farming of the country. A considerable number of the young women have also taken service in Winnipeg, where they have done well, and in many cases remitted considerable sums to their friends in the settlement, in the same generous spirit as that manifested by Irish emigrants.

I made application to Mr. Stewart, signal observer at Winnipeg, for a monthly statement of the fall of rain and melted snow for the past six years, and he very kindly furnished me with the following figures:

Months.	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877
January	0,440	0,280	0,460	0,597	0,969	0,290
February	0,480	1,190	0,316	0,554	1,210	0,100
March	1,880	0,200	0,802	0,231	0,832	0,864
April	5,470	0,920	0,525	0,664	0.580	1,050
May	3,800	2,380	1,990	1,994	3,190	5,124
June	3,900	3,370	4,346	3,418	5,400	7,120
July	1,620	3,550	3,067	1,235	3,315	3,240
August	1,850	1,170	3,346	4,587	9,440	0.830
September	8,090	2,290	1,732	0,860	0.410	2,015
October	1,550	0,535	0,330	1,390	0,590	
November	1,040	0,815	1,032	0,732	1,776	
December	0,350	0,350	0,371	0,955	0,522	
Total	30,170	17,040	18,317	17,217	28,234	

It will be observed that the year of 1876, more particularly for the month of August, was very wet, yet the quantity of wheat raised for that year was at least half a million bushels, averaging in weight 63 lbs. to the bushel. From the returns made in thirty settlements, the average yield per acre was, for wheat 32½ bushels, barley 43, oats 51, peas 33, potatoes 230, turnips 660. In the present year a much larger area was sown, and the yield was greater, and the grain of a superior quality. It is estimated that there will be a surplus for exportation of at least 150,000 bushels of wheat this year. The only drawback is the want of facilities. When the Red River navigation closes they are, comparatively speaking, shut out from the outside world. The Red River Transportation Company have a fleet of excellent boats that carry enormous freights, but the rates are heavy —24cts. per bushel to Duluth. Wheat was selling at Winnipeg for 70cts. per bushel, and it was of a superior quality to that sold in Toronto for $1.12 to $1.15. This state of things will soon change.

The railway from Winnipeg south is all graded and ready for the rails. The only delay is, not with the Dominion Government, but with the St. Paul and Pacific bond and stock holders, in not completing the gap between Crookston or Fisher's Landing, and Emerson*. The completion of this line and also the Pacific from the head waters of Lake Superior (Thunder Bay) to Fort Garry, or Selkirk, will give an impetus to business in the Province unequalled in any of the Western States. What the agriculturists in Manitoba require are a few scientific practical farmers among them, who would encourage the raising of improved breeds of cattle, make a proper selection of seeds, and see to the rotation of crops. An erroneous impression prevails that the soil is inexhaustible and requires no fertilizing or manuring. We occasionally find farmers boasting of the convenience of having their barns and outhouses erected over a

* It is understood that this connection is to be completed during the summer of 1878.

ravine, so that the spring freshets will carry off the manure! In, deed this custom was so common that the Legislature, in 1871 passed an Act to prevent the waters of the rivers and streams from being polluted by filth and impurities deposited along the banks.

The Province is divided into five counties for judicial, municipal and registration purposes. The present organized counties, which return members to the Dominion Parliament, are Selkirk, Provencher, Lisgar, Marquette East, and Marquette West. The Province is divided into twenty-four separate electoral divisions, each entitled to return a member to the Local House. The local sessional allowance is $300 and mileage. The subsidy paid the Province by the Dominion is $90,000 per annum. I find that the estimates for the several years are as follows:—1872, $81,425; 1873, $72,655; 1874. $75,-952.02; 1875, $93,450; 1876, $95,000; 1877, $93,750. Before taking our leave of the city for the North-West I took a drive to Selkirk. The crops about Kildonan were excellent. The roads were bad until the Stone Fort was passed. Afterwards the soil was more sandy, which absorbed the rain. An embryo town has sprung up at Selkirk in anticipation of the crossing of the Pacific railway. Speculation was running wild. Lots were selling at fabulous prices. Several hotels, two or three stores and a few private dwellings had been built. Messrs. Sifton & Farewell, contractors, are the mainstay of the place at present. The bridge will be 900 feet; Eastern trestle works, 1700 feet; Western, 900. The season has been unfavourable for prosecuting public works. From this point to Rat Portage, which includes section 15, Mr. Whitehead's contract, I understand about 1000 men are employed. I examined a field of oats belonging to the contractors, containing 200 acres, and it was very heavy, and likely to yield 60 or 70 bushels per acre.

The following morning, the 4th of August, I made preparation for the western tour. We pitched our tents for the night on the west bank of the Assiniboine. The weather being fine, we slept very comfortably. The next day being Sunday we had no inclination to proceed on our journey. While at Silver Heights we examined the thorough-bred horses and the domesticated buffaloes of the Hon. Mr. Mackay. We noticed seven buffaloes of various ages. The cows are supposed to possess superior dairy qualities to others. Passing the handsome residence of the Hon. D. A. Smith, we noticed a number of men employed erecting a ball-room and making other preparations for the reception of the Governor-General, who was to be the guest of Mr. Smith during his stay in Manitoba. We soon arrived at Sturgeon Creek. The bridge spanning this creek had broken in the centre, one half at an angle of 45 degrees down stream, the other half in a similar manner facing the other way. With some difficulty we succeeded in crossing. Near this point we passed the re-

sidence of John Grant, a wealthy half-breed, who keeps a large number of horses and oxen employed in freighting to Edmonton and other points. Two months afterwards we met Mr. Grant on the Salt Plains, taking out Governor Laird's family to Battleford. Mr. Grant is the owner of a large grass farm on the Boyne river. After his return in the fall all his horses and oxen are turned out on the Boyne farm and remain out all winter. He informs me that he always finds them in much better condition in spring than when turned out in the fall. Passing along through the parishes of St. James, St. Charles, Headingly, St. François Xavier, some of the best farms in the Province are seen. The crops had a splendid appearance. Late in the evening we arrived at House's hotel, distant from the city of Winnipeg 26 miles, and put up for the night.

LETTER V.

Roughing it in the Prairie Province—Tenting on the Old Camp Ground —Travelling Under Difficulties—An Emigration Field for Teeming Millions—Incidents, &c., &c.

My last communication landed us at House's hotel, distant from Winnipeg 26 miles. Mine host, House, is a shrewd American, and a good caterer to his numerous customers. For an American he is brimful of allegiance to the British Crown, and bomb-proof against revolutions. Next morning we made preparations for an early start, for we had ascertained the previous night that the late freshets in the Assiniboine had backed up the waters of Long Lake, and flooded the road in several places, and that it would be impossible to cross Baie St. Paul, which was completely submerged, consequently we were under the necessity of deviating from the old road to the north round Long Lake, and lengthening the distance to High Bluff at least 10 miles. We were desirous of reaching High Bluff that night, the distance round by the lake being at least 35 miles, and, from all the information we could glean, the road was almost impassable. For the first few miles we drove along at a moderate speed, the trail passing along a ridge or table land, but we soon encountered low marshy hay lands; in crossing the small gutters and ravines, the wheels sank up to the axles. Many thousand acres were partially submerged this season by the damming back of the waters of Long Lake. All these lands produce a luxuriant growth of grass, thousands of tons being cut annually in the neighbourhood of Baie St. Paul. Cattle and horses have a wide range in summer, and it is stated that many leave their horses to roam uncared for through the winter. These lands are capable of drainage; indeed on my return I found that the Local Government had let a contract to dig

a canal from the lake to empty its waters into the Assiniboine. This work, no doubt, will prove effectual, unless an unusual flood occurs such as that of this season. The oldest settler has no recollection of the waters being so high or the roads in such an impassable state. After extricating ourselves from those almost bottomless pits, we crossed a long stretch of high undulating prairie. Far away in the distance to the right could be seen Woodland Settlement; to the left, distant several miles, the Assiniboine, winding through stretches of timber, which skirt its banks. Between these points thousands of acres of rich agricultural lands are lying waste, unbroken by spade or plough, which have been transferred from one speculator to another. Some probably would sell for a reasonable profit, while other asked exorbitant prices and retard settlement. Many prefer settling in the midst of a prairie, and hauling their fuel, building timber and fencing for miles, than to undertake the clearing of a wooded lot. All who procure a homestead or settle upon the Government domain are entitled to 20 acres of timbered lands, and those who have settled upon prairie land have their respective allotments, in most cases situate at a reasonable distance from the homestead. On the prairie nature has prepared the soil for immediate use, all that is required being to fence the fields and commence ploughing. A strong team is requisite to break the tough sod, but by turning the grass down, exposing the roots to the sun, the soil soon becomes mellow and fit for cultivation. After the first breaking, it is a pleasure for any lad to plough, quite a contrast to chopping and clearing, burning trees and eradicating stumps. Most people prefer a mixture of prairie and timbered lands, and thousands of such situations can be procured further west. Many are peculiar in their choice, and are influenced by friends and acquaintances to settle on lands not the most desirable on account of certain privileges, such as convenience to other settlers who speak the same language, and have educational and personal privileges within a reasonable distance. All these privileges follow in the wake of settlement in a few years. It is only deprivation for a limited time, and by depriving themselves for a short period settlers may procure more desirable and more comfortable homesteads. Any one accustomed to stock-raising should by all means select rolling prairie and meadow lands. An abundance of hay can be raised and put up at little expense. Horses and cattle thrive and get fat on the natural grasses.

Proceeding on our way we come in sight of the beautiful improved farm of Mr. Wagner. The trail next takes a turn to the left across a long muskeg. With some considerable difficulty, plunging in and out of mud holes, we crossed and arrived at the residence of an old pensioner named Harvey, a Nova Scotian. Night was fast approaching; and we had to travel 10 or 12 miles to reach High

Bluff. After wading through several small creeks, and undergoing torture from mosquitoes for hours, we succeeded in reaching Mr. Alcock's, at High Bluff, about 11 o'clock at night, besmeared with mud and dirt, very much fatigued, and we duly appreciated a warm supper and comfortable bed. The Alcock family are in possession of large limits of splendid land, with good improvements thereon, and good houses and outbuildings. They also keep a general store. The following morning we removed our quarters to the residence of Mr. Wm. Moss, formerly a resident of Mornington. Mr. Moss is the proprietor of a well-improved farm, very conveniently situated. Mr. Moss and myself drove through the settlements, visiting acquaintances I formed in 1874, and examining the crops. What a remarkable change! On that occasion every green blade was destroyed; the very atmosphere was polluted by the grasshoppers; the settlers were depressed in spirits; and some have left the Province discouraged. These who fought it out and remained are now in comfortable circumstances, surrounded in many instances by members of their own families, who have procured homes near to or at a reasonable distance from the old homestead. In 1874 the only solitary settler outside the river lots in this neighbourhood was Mr. Whimster, of Blanchard; he had located on the broad open prairie, not a tree or shrub to be seen within two miles of his dwelling. Now he is surrounded with good settlers, owning improved farms. The whole prairie is dotted with comfortable dwellings and fine cultivated fields. Thousands of acres of wheat and other grains are waving in the wind, and the few cattle and horses then seen have multiplied by hundreds. This settlement extends from Poplar Point to Rat Creek, some 30 miles in length, and from the Assiniboine to Lake Manitoba, embracing within its limits about 200,000 acres of as rich, productive land as can be found upon the continent. It is settled principally by Canadians, whose previous experience and training admirably fitted them for enduring temporary hardships and trials, to which all first settlers are subject. The settlers are to a unite clamoring for railway facilities. They want some better means of transportation for their surplus produce, and are waiting patiently for either the Government or private capitalists to open to them some means of communication with markets. The time and expense of carrying their produce to market are very great. A unanimous feeling prevails that some effort must shortly be made to encourage the construction of public works. The right of way and even a large bonus would freely be given to any company or Government to carry through this work. Freight and passenger rates might not pay for a time a large interest on the investment, but ultimately a railway would become remunerative. Lands adjoining the road and for miles round would be enhanced

in value many hundred per cent. by railways. A stimulus would be given to the agriculturist; larger areas would be put under crop; waste lands would become occupied and brought under cultivation; towns and villages would spring up; manufacturing interests would be encouraged: the producer and consumer would be brought closer together, and the country would blossom as the rose.

What a prospect do these prairies open up to the teeming millions of Europe; the hardy Highland cotter, dragging out a miserable existence, allowed by sufferance the privilege of cultivating a barren corner on his landlord's estate; the English or Irish tenant farmer, paying enough annually in poor rates and taxes to purchase him a farm in Manitoba; the farm labourer and female servant, slaving away their lives for a scanty pittance, scarcely enough to keep soul and body together; all may, if located upon these fertile and productive lands, in a few years, by steady and industrious habits, succeed in procuring a competency for themselves and families. We do not expect that every settler will become wealthy in a new country; some would languish if placed in the garden of Eden; but we do say that all may, by industry, thrift and economy, prosper. All the Canadian settlers, to my knowledge, in this neighbourhood and throughout the Province, have done well and have good prospects of success. They could now readily dispose of their homesteads at considerable profit. During our peregrinations we visited a gathering of Sioux Indians who were encamped on the prairie. These Indians are not plain hunters or of the roving class, but have remained around this neighbourhood since they and their descendants were driven across the borders after the fearful butchery of innocent settlers in Minnesota some years ago. Many find employment with the farmers during haying and harvest. The squaws and younger members of the tribe are engaged weeding root crops, etc., yet with all their intercourse with the whites they don't appear to rise in the scale of human existence, remaining still cringing, degenerate, superstitious creatures. If these poor benighted people could be taught to cultivate the soil, to build houses instead of lying upon the ground, exposed to inclement weather, to wear suitable, warm and comfortable clothing instead of the filthy buffalo robe or blanket, there would be some hope for them. The following morning we procured two splendid native horses, in addition to our span of mules, purchased a Red River cart, and arranged for our friend Mr. Moss to accompany us. Mr. Moss was accustomed to camp life, was possessed of mechanical skill, and could repair a wheel or an axle if required. He was an excellent marksman, a good cook, and could make himself generally useful. About noon on a Saturday—near the end of August, we got our cavalcade in order, and moved westward to Portage la Prairie.

This is a flourishing village, but is at present much the shape of an 'ant; it requires filling in the centre. At the east end an enterprising firm have a splendid steam grist mill. There is another excellent steam grist mill at the west end, owned by the Hudson Bay Company, and a Mr. Smith. We noticed in several general stores a good selection of merchandise. The crown land office and registry office are attended to by Mr. Mills and Mr. James, two efficient and obliging officials. We noticed machine shops, also bakers and butchers, and two well-conducted hotels. The town is situate in the heart of a fine agricultural country, and no doubt in a very few years will grow to be a place of considerable importance. We visited Mr. Joseph Ryan, M.P., who has just completed one of the neatest and most substantial residences in the country. Mr. Ryan is doing a very lucrative and extensive business. Crossing over this undulating fertile prairie we noticed that several tracts of new land had been broken up during the season by new arrivals, and that others were enlarging the limits of their improvements. The crops along our route had a healthy appearance. The day was warm, the thermometer stood at noon 80° in the shade, but the exhilarating breezes wafted over the prairies rendered travelling very pleasant. Taking a glance at the surroundings from an elevated position, about midway between the Portage and Rat Creek, to the south and south-east could be seen the Assiniboine winding through the valley, its banks skirted or fringed with a border of very valuable timber, oak and elm in abundance, of large size and splendid material for building or fencing. This fringe of wooded lands along the river averages from one-fourth to a mile in width. The outside border is usually a strip of poplar. Frequently adjoining the open prairie are small bluffs or copses of poplar. Away to the north can be seen scores of houses and improved farms, extending nearly to Lake Manitoba, without a single tree or shrub to obscure the vision. This vast territory had been settled and brought under cultivation since my former visit three years before. To the north-west can be seen an immense natural meadow on which were scores of people busily engaged cutting, curing or drawing hay, and stacking it for winter use. This natural meadow contains at least 50,000 acres. The hay is a thick sward, at least two feet high, and in many places much higher. It can be cut with a mower, and stacked at an expense not exceeding $2 per ton. Crossing the prairie we arrive at Rat Creek, which is spanned by a miserable, dangerous, rickety old bridge. The abutments had been washed down stream and the railing carried away by the recent freshets; some temporary posts had been put under the structure; the remnants were standing on stilts. Before risking life or limb, I thought it advisable to visit my old friend Kenneth McKenzie, M.P.P., who

resides on the adjoining farm. Unfortunately he was from home in Winnipeg. We also examined the farm of Mr. Grant, who has very large improvements, splendid select stock, etc., and is possessed of all the essential elements of comfort. Messrs. Mackenzie, Grant, Lynch and Stewart, of the Portage, and a few others, have done much good among the farming community of Manitoba in importing improved breeds of stock, and disseminating practical information among the people, producing a spirit of emulation and competition. Mrs. Mackenzie informed us that by going a few miles south we could cross Rat Creek on the level; that nearly all travellers and freighters took that route in preference to crossing the old dilapidated bridge. The evening, however, being far advanced, and we anxious to proceed a few miles, we concluded to risk the bridge. The props in the centre appeared much longer than the rest, and the bridge was humped or rounded like a dromedary. However, we succeeding in crossing, and congratulated ourselves that we had performed a feat. From Rat Creek we travelled over a very level prairie, all good arable land, without a solitary settler for five miles, and camped near the dwelling of Mr. Youmans. The ground being wet from recent rain we procured some straw to spread under our robes, and retired for the night. A few hours afterwards we were disturbed by hogs rooting at our feet, within the tent. Mr. Moss instantly felt round for the gun, being certain that our camp was invaded by bears. However, he soon discovered his error, and we drove the swine away. The next day being Sunday we indulged ourselves in a longer rest than usual. While lying awake, I felt something wet on my pillow, touching my neck. My first thought was that it had rained during the night, and that the tent had leaked. Raising my head and looking round, I noticed on my pillow a lizard at least nine to ten inches in length, perfectly composed. It remained till I had awakened my son and Mr. Moss to examine the reptile. A cold shiver ran through me. On account of this little circumstance we always afterwards securely pinned down our tent. During the day we accompanied Mr. Youmans over his beautiful farm, and examined his crops. The farm is somewhat elevated above the surrounding prairie, and the strip of timber fringing Rat Creek could be plainly seen. I noticed that he had broken and cultivated a strip of land about a rod in width and nearly a mile in length all along the west side of his farm and had planted slips of locust, but the most of them had not taken root. I suggested to him the propriety of making a ditch and raising the earth three or four feet, sodding the ditch side, and planting along the raised ditch either poplar or heavy locust. Providing such a fence will grow, and I have every reason to believe it will, it would be much cheaper than a rail fence. The one would require to

be renewed every ten or twelve years; the other would last a lifetime, and would shelter and embellish the farm. Taking an early start on Monday morning we soon enter the long woods, a portion of the road that is almost invariably bad. All freighters dread passing through the long woods, and we found more broken wheels and axles for the next 25 or 30 miles than during the whole trip. Then follows a continuation of marsh and bog, and the various trails would puzzle an Indian. After rounding and wading through bogs and marshes for two hours, we arrived at Image Creek. I failed to see my image in it, for the waters were muddy, owing to the heavy rains. However, the creek had a good hard bottom. We watered our animals, and took a long draught ourselves. The water was good, if rather thick. The land in this neighbourhood is not very desirable. I have no doubt it is all susceptible of drainage, and could be converted into good pasture land, but this would be attended with considerable outlay. We noticed that fire had made great havoc with the timber. Blackened trees and stumps were seen extending over large tracks. If protected for a few years this timber would grow rapidly and become valuable. Many patches are untouched by fire. The kind is poplar, adapted only for fuel and fencing. After many twistings and turnings we arrive at the first of three creeks, known by freighters as the three creek section. A lovely stream of pure sparkling water runs over a gravelly bottom, and to the west of the stream runs a sandy ridge of land elevated some 20 feet above the level of the country to the east, over which we passed. Ascending the ridge for observation, we noticed that the land was on a level with the table land. The soil was much lighter than any we had passed. Retracing our steps to the foot of the hill, we ran along a level road as straight and as good as a race course for nearly two miles, till we reached Mr. McKinnon's, the first settler from Mr. Youmans, whose place we had left early in the morning. Mr. McKinnon had come from the county of Middlesex with a family of young men. He has taken up a section (640 acres of land) and made considerable improvements thereon, and appears perfectly contented. The nearest settler east is Mr. Youmans, 24 miles, and to the west by the trail fully 80 miles to Tanner's on the Little Saskatchewan. The weather had been favourable during the day, rather sultry, but towards evening clouds gathered in the north and north-west; and there were occasional flashes of lightning, which foretold a coming storm. We crossed Second Creek, a fine clear stream, over a corduroy bridge. Passing through some considerable woodland we soon arrive at Spring Creek No. 3. Some kind traveller had cut a few poles and put brush across the creek, over which we passed with safety. The rain pattering on our gipsy-covered waggon stimulated our movements. The road was in a shocking

condition ; we travelled up and down gullies, through several of which the width of the waggon had only been cut ; plunging over stumps and into deep ruts. The rain fell in torrents, accompanied by flashes of lightning and heavy thunder, yet, amid all these inconveniences, we drove some miles to the brow of a hill, overlooking a high and rolling prairie. On our left down in the valley we saw a beautiful lake. As darkness was fast approaching we unhitched our animals with some difficulty. Notwithstanding that they were much jaded they had become frantic and furious from the torture of swarms of flies. We tethered them for the night, pitched our tent, and with some trouble kindled a fire and prepared a splendid supper, composed of four pigeons and two plovers, which we had shot while passing through the long woods. We have now passed through the province of Manitoba, and commence our journey in the North-West Territory.

LETTER VI.

The North-West Territory—Its vast extent and capabilities—Indian Treaties—Cession of Immense Tracts of Land—A Country two-thirds the size of Europe—The site of several Provinces—Lakes and Rivers—Hills and Valleys—Arrival at Fort Ellice, etc.

I closed my last communication after a severe storm, which thoroughly drenched us. Next morning we made preparations for an early start. We had scarcely commenced our journey when we saw two Indians and their squaws, each with a child, just getting up from the wet ground and folding their blankets around them, preparing for their journey, without any breakfast. The Indian is quite indifferent to and apparently regardless of the approach of hunger until long after the last morsel is consumed. These poor natives had made no provision for their wants. They lay out on the grass with the canopy of heaven for a covering ; they had no forebodings, no murmurs. In all probability they had gone to bed supperless, and likely had enjoyed a more refreshing sleep than many who had lain on beds of down. We gave them something to eat, for which they seemed thankful. We are now in the North-West Territory. Permit me to describe to your numerous readers the vastness of this portion of the Dominion. The territory itself, lying to the east of the Rocky Mountains, contains 2,206,725 square miles, or 1,412,304,000 acres—a territory nearly two-thirds the size of the entire continent of Europe. The North-West territory, known as the Saskatchewan country, is bounded on the south by parallel 49° north lati-

tude, on the west by the Rocky Mountains, on the north by parallel 55°, and on the east by the Province of Manitoba. It is about 900 miles in length by 500 in breadth. When we consider that in this vast extent many Provinces equal in size to the Province of Manitoba, can be cut out suitable for the culture of the best wheat and other cereals, and converted into happy home for millions of the surplus population of Europe, we may safely predict for this country a great future. At present, with but few exceptions, this vast expanse is overrun by beasts of prey and a few thousand Indians, who have nearly all surrendered their right and title to the soil on certain conditions, and are treated as wards by the Government. The system adopted in grouping them together on reserve set apart expressly for their use is an admirable one. They may possibly in time be taught habits of industry, become producers, and assume the privileges and responsibilities of white settlers. The Sioux seem capable of such teaching, and the younger members of the tribe may be trained to till the soil. They number about 1,500, not including the bands who recently crossed the border under Sitting Bull, whose stay may be only temporary. The Saulteaux, Crees, Assiniboines and some other small tribes number about 14,000 or 15,000. The Black Feet, along the plains and eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, number probably 10,000.

I may here cite the various treaties that have taken place since Confederation: Treaty No. 1 took plae in August, 1871, by which Canada came into possession of the Province of Manitoba, and a portion of the adjoining territory, containing 185,000 square miles. No. 2 was effected also in 1871, north-we t of Manitoba, 32,000 square miles. No. 3, in October, 1873, east of Manitoba (Keewatin), 49,700 square miles. No. 4, in September, 1874, west of treaty No. 2, south of the Saskatchewan, and extending from Lake Winnipegosis to Cypress Hills, 75,700 square miles. No. 5, in September, 1875, the territory surrounding Lake Winnipeg, 102,000 square miles. No. 6, in September, 1876, extending from treaty No. 5, Main Saskatchewan, to the Rocky Mountains, 120,000 square miles. No. 7, effected recently by Governor Laird, extending from Cypress Hills to the Rocky Mountains, and from the United States boundary to treaty No. 6, 52,000 square miles. Altogether these treaties embrace within their limits 616,400 square miles, or 394,496,000 acres. We followed the trail over a rough undulating prairie up grade considerably for two or three miles. We then passed over sand hills along a ravine. We ascended to the summit of the highest, from which we obtained a lovely view of the surrounding country. There was a vast area of hill and dale to the west and south, dotted over with burr oaks, resembling an old orchard. The little lakes or ponds and the sides of the hills were fringed with evergreens, spruce or pine, resembling an old country park or pleasure ground.

To the north, away in the distance, could be seen, like a dark cloud, the heavy timbered lands of the Riding Mountains, and between our position and the mountains lie the beautiful plains. These lovely plains are adapted for agriculture, and no doubt will soon be all under cultivation. The country we were passing over was really enchanting; but the soil of some of this land is light, much resembling the lands in northern Wisconsin; and, if in a more southern latitude, would be well adapted for the raising of corn, but in a dry season crops may suffer for want of moisture. The light land, however, is but of limited extent. Passing through oak openings for a few miles we enter a level plain many miles in width, the outer borders skirted with poplar groves and some light timber adapted for fuel and rails. The soil is not that rich dark loam found along river bottoms; but it is of a nature to yield abundantly for a few years. Afterwards it would require to be enriched by artificial means. Such soil may be enriched by barn manure or a coating of marl from low bottom lands; and no soil can be expected to endure waste, however rich in its own resources, without great depreciation of crops, both in quantity and quality. Travelling a few miles further we arrive at Pine Creek, a small stream running through a deep valley. On the east side the slope is gradual for fully three-quarters of a mile. On the west side we find sandy hills, rising abruptly from the banks of the creek. We pitched our tents and prepared our meal, giving our animals two hours' rest, and watering them out of this crystal stream. We then drove them down an old buffalo run, which had been tramped and worn to the water's edge years ago by hundreds of buffaloes coming to quench their thirst. Their bones are scattered all over the prairies. They have left tangible proofs of their former runs, but now these animals are rarely seen so far east. We frequently crossed buffalo runs from the high plains to lakes or creeks, that are now grown over, but can be traced for miles, proving conclusively that numerous herds roamed over this section of country, until recently. For a few miles after crossing Pine Creek the soil is light, with a few scattered scrubby oak trees. We soon come to the forks of the road, the one to the left leading to Qu'Appelle, the other to the Little Saskatchewan. We then pass over some marshy land susceptible of drainage. For ten or fifteen miles we travel over a fine prairie, with occasional clumps of small willows, but no timber. The land is rich and productive, and may answer admirably for a settlement of Mennonites who require but little timber. In the afternoon we arrive at Boggy Creek, which is properly named, and how so many freighters pass over with such heavy loads was to me a mystery. After examining this filthy bog up and down for half a mile for a favourable place to cross, we failed to find one better than another. Mr. Moss led the way, plunged into the mire and stuck, and with some assistance,

gained the opposite side. We followed, and, with some slashing, we also succeeded in crossing. To the west of Boggy Creek we found half a dozen trails, and the difficulty was to ascertain which to take. Shortly afterwards we saw a man on horseback in the distance. He drew near, and we made enquiries respecting the route. Following his directions for miles, and night approaching, we camped out. We had taken the precaution to carry wood with us for cooking supper and breakfast, but, as the flies were numerous and vicious, we exhausted our supplies of wood keeping up a smudge to clear them away. The poor animals had no water, and, being tethered to stakes, passed a restless night. After retiring for the night one of my mules broke his tether, and made for the smudge at the door of our tent and actually rolled over in the fire to free himself from his tormentors. One of his legs and also quite a patch in his side was severely burned. This incident kept us awake the greater part of the night. Next morning we made an early start, having no fuel to cook our breakfast, and no water for the animals to drink. For the first few miles we crossed low meadow lands. Afterwards we came to rich rolling prairie, with a small growth of poplars and willows. We camped for breakfast alongside a small lake, where we watered our horses and mules, and prepared a sumptuous repast, what the French call *boudlon*, composed of fat pork, prairie chickens, etc., all boiled together in a big pot. After washing this mixture down with strong black tea, we again prepared for our journey. For many miles we travelled over a rough gravelly country, covered with boulders. The prairie and road are thrown up by badgers and moles, and become almost dangerous for animals to travel over. We passed numerous little lakes many of which were literally covered with ducks and young broods of ducklings. They were quite tame and apparently unconscious of the danger of our approach. We passed over some rough land with occasional gravelly ridges, till we arrived at the cross roads. A shingle was put on a pole on which was written with a pencil "five miles to Tanner's Bridge" but we were at a loss to ascertain which road to take. However we took the road leading to the right; the other led to the shallow waters of the river, where freighters can ford without much inconvenience and no expense. Between the crossing and Tanner's bridge we found the Ralston colony, which up to this season was composed of two *bonâ fide* settlers with about two acres under cultivation. About a hundred per cent. has this season been added to their numbers. This settlement, as I predicted in 1874, proved a failure. I am persuaded that many more would have located themselves in this neighbourhood, had this reservation not been made. We ascended a grade, over a rough road, passing through willows and small poplar groves, and arrived at the brow of a hill in front of the beautiful

valley, which forms a pleasing contrast to the level lands we had passed over. In this neighbourhood we found but little timber of any size, all having been destroyed by freighters and annual fires. We proceeded down grade for nearly two miles, and arrived at Tanner's Bridge, which we crossed after paying a fee of 25 cts. each for the horses and a similar fee for the carriages. This river has a rapid current, and empties its waters into the Assiniboine (some 20 miles to the south). The bridge is a rickety, corduroy, rough structure. The river is about 100 feet wide at the bridge and from 6 to 10 feet deep. The flats on the west side had been flooded, and were in a dangerous state. The river is approached in several places, more particularly down the ravine on the route to Beautiful Plains, by easy gradients, and the high banks on the opposite side are also easily ascended through deep ravines. There is no apparent obstruction to constructing a railway across this valley. The west bank is probably 200 feet high. The whole valley is an alluvial deposit, brought down by the river, and is much elevated above the bed of the stream. The river must have been much larger in past ages. On my return trip I visited the settlement, examined crops, etc. After pitching our tent, Captain French, of the Mounted Police, rode up and inquired if we had any liquors in our possession. We had not.

The grass being scarce on the river flats, we only hobbled our animals and attached to them long ropes for the purpose of catching them early the following morning. The flies being very troublesome, the poor brutes would scarcely leave the smudge, and for safety we raked out the fire and spread the coals before retiring to rest. The mules returned and rolled over the hot embers, and we had to go to the river for water and put out the coals. Next morning one of the horses and both mules were missing. After a long search we found them in the thick brush near the river; they had wound themselves fast in the brush in trying to rub off the flies. Captain French paid us a second visit next morning, and we proceeded to his head quarters at Shoal Lake. We gathered our cavalcade together, drove down the valley for a mile, and then ascended the hill, along a natural ravine and up an easy grade. We soon arrived at the summit, and took a survey of the surroundings. The land is excellent, but the scarcity of timber may retard extensive settlement for some time. At present frequent prairie fires have destroyed large tracts of valuable timber, particularly west of the river. The Indians frequently communicate with each other by means of prairie fires, and the half-breeds and other traders camping, carelessly leave fires which spread for miles. Sometimes this is done intentionally, for the purpose of getting sweeter grass the following season. Large tracts of dry burned trees

are seen along our route for miles. The fires have been evidently for years encroaching on the wood lands and enlarging the prairies. We noticed several improved farms, and examined the crops of Mr. Cameron, which were excellent. The wheat crop would, if properly secured, yield at least forty bushels to the acre. Away to the west I noticed extensive tracts of timber lands, and I am informed that a saw mill and grist mill will be put up next season, which will be a great accommodation to the settlers. The soil for miles is a rich heavy clay loam; its surface is very irregular, and diversified with small lakes, swamps and meadow lands. These could all be easily drained and converted into the best agricultural lands.

For the next 20 miles we pass over a rolling prairie totally denuded of timber. The soil is excellent, but the scarcity of timber may prevent settlement. The view extended for miles on each side of the trail. In passing over the tract we found no water until we arrived within ten miles of Shoal Lake. Near the road we noticed two salt lakes, in which we felt inclined to bathe, but the day being far advanced reluctantly refrained. The trail that forks off five miles to the east of Tanner's Bridge here again joins the old trail. From this to Shoal Lake we found in many places a considerable quantity of young timber, and in a few years, if protected from fires, there would be sufficient for the wants of an extensive settlement. The luxuriant grasses are evidence of the fertility and richness of the soil. Late in the evening we sighted the observatory or scaffolding erected on the brow of the hill for the purpose of hoisting the British flag, this being one of the stations of the Mounted Police. It can be seen for miles. Crossing a natural meadow of some extent we drove through small copses of willows and aspen bushes that skirt the lake. The trail crosses the corner of the lake, through which we drove our carriages. We were met in this narrow pass by members of the Mounted Police, who allowed us to pass without examination. No doubt the captain had informed his men that we had previously been examined, and nothing contraband found in our possession. Passing along to the high lands between the two lakes at the cross roads leading to Fort Ellice and Polly, we found encamped, our fellow-travellers, Col. Richardson and family. After partaking of a sumptuous supper, we compared notes. The Colonel took an early start the following morning. I concluded to remain over a day to recruit my horses and mules, which showed signs of being somewhat jaded, having travelled upwards of 40 miles the previous day. During the day the flies were not so troublesome, and we allowed the animals to roam at large. We had good sporting shooting ducks, which were almost numberless on this beautiful lake. Captain French employs those under his command occasionally in cultivating the soil. His crop of oats of about 10 acres was excellent,

and would yield at least 50 bushels per acre. Potatoes and other root crops were very good. He also expected to cut over 100 tons of hay.

Shoal Lake is five miles in length, and in width in places three-fourths of a mile. It abounds with perch, pike, etc. The land in this locality is undulating to the south and east; to the west there are fine meadow lands. The water is good and plentiful, and there is sufficient timber for the ordinary requirements of a large settlement. Next morning we proceeded on our journey. For the first two or three miles we passed over rich prairies, with clumps of scattered timber. We then crossed low meadow lands, on which could be made large quantities of hay. Here we met the eldest son of Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, M.P.P., who was returning from Edmonton, having converted the previous year's crop of wheat into flour, freighted it to the Rocky Mountains, and effected a sale, averaging from $14 to $15 per sack of 100 lbs. Young McKenzie is in possession of a fine farm at Beautiful Plains, and appears as shrewd in making money as his father. After travelling 10 miles we arrived at Oak Creek, a fine stream running south and emptying into the Assiniboine. As usual we took the precaution to go up and down the stream for the purpose of ascertaining the most desirable place to cross, as we had no means of knowing the depth, the water being turbid. From Oak Creek to Bird's Tail Creek, some 10 or 12 miles, the general appearance of the land is sufficiently rolling for natural drainage, and is well adapted for agriculture. Notwithstanding that fires have swept over this section in years past, and destroyed valuable timber and enlarged the prairie limits, with care new trees would grow up rapidly and soon be sufficient for domestic use. About noon we overtook Colonel Richardson, deliberating how best to cross Bird Tail Creek, a considerable and rapid stream flowing south and emptying its waters into the Assiniboine. This stream, not over 30 feet wide, has during the course of ages, scooped out the valley over half a mile in width. The banks on the east side are a gradual decline, but on the west, steep and precipitous. On the east bank I noticed one intending settler, Mr. Sinclair, who had erected a small tenement near the falls—a splendid location, with excellent soil, good spring water, and large limits of good timber lands a short distance up the river. We forded this stream, the depth of the water being about four feet, with a good gravelly or stoney bottom. From the river to Snake Creek we crossed several deep cut ravines, and large tracts of land of a light sandy texture, with a gravelly subsoil, and a considerable number of boulders scattered over the surface. Snake Creek is probably so named from its windings. Along its eastern bank we found a thrifty growth of timber, but on the west it was perfectly

bare. Proceeding onward over some rough, stoney land and many large tracts of good arable soil, we arrived at the brow of the hill in front of Fort Ellice, the deep valley lying between, with the Assiniboine winding through rich alluvial deposits. From Fort Pelly, for a considerable distance south of Fort Ellice, it runs nearly south, then takes a sharp divergence and runs south-east, and after entering the Province of Manitoba, north-east, empties its waters into the Red River, at the city of Winnipeg. The valley opposite Fort Ellice from summit to summit of the banks, is fully two miles. The banks are steep, and fully 250 feet high. These slopes are covered with a considerable growth of timber, useful for fencing and fuel, but of no practical use for building purposes. On the plateau on the eastern side we passed through several Indian encampments. Hundreds of the natives had here met together for the purpose of receiving their annual allowance of money and other necessaries accruing to them under the treaty. Away across the valley in a very prominent position stood the Hudson Bay fort, with its flag waving in the breeze. We made the descent by a circuitous track to the valley below, drove across the flats and crossed the river over a substantial new bridge, erected for the accommodation of travellers by Mr. McDonald, Hudson Bay agent. A reasonable fee is charged for this convenience, towards paying the expense of its construction and keeping it in proper repair. Down in the valley we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. House, the well-known landlord of House's Hotel, on his way to Qu'Appelle to meet old customers. He advised us to camp down in the river flats, as the feed for our animals was much better than on the high lands adjoining the fort. This letter is descriptive of four days travel—150 miles. A very large percentage of this extensive tract is adapted for the successful culture of wheat, and, where wheat ripens abundantly, it follows of course that all the coarse grains and roots will grow to perfection. The rich natural meadows and pasture grounds are favourable to stock raising. We found in many places a limited supply of timber. Wherever there is a growth there are almost sure to be refreshing showers during the season of vegetation. We noticed in our travels patches of land that had escaped fires for a few years. It is astonishing how rapidly poplar, aspen and willows spring up, and the more timber is cultivated the more healthy and salubrious are the seasons. Further south across the border, there is an insufficiency of rainfall, and a dry atmosphere. The lands are bare open prairies useless for agricultural purposes except perhaps sheep grazing.

LETTER VII.

Fort Ellice and its Surroundings—The Hudson Bay Officials not Averse to Settlement—Southern Route for the Pacific Railway—Inoculating the Aborigines—Polygamy among the Indians—The Plains as a Field for Stock-raising—Scarcity of Water, &c., &c.

Fort Ellice is situate in 50° 24 north latitude, and in west longitude 101° 30; distant from the city of Winnipeg about two hundred and thirty miles west, with a deviation of twenty-six or thirty miles north. The fort, like all Hudson Bay forts, is surrounded by a stockade. It is erected on the brow of the hill on the edge of the plateau overlooking the valley of the Assiniboine. The valley is from hill to hill two miles in width, in which the river is seen sluggishly meandering through rich bottom lands. The water during many centuries has cut numerous beds and forsaken them in turns. Old channels have been filled up, or partially so, by floods or annual freshets. Along the banks steppes or benches are seen, one above another, evident traces of a higher level at some remote period, and this wearing process is still going on. The water is at all times turbid, and deposits sediment when allowed to stand in a vessel for a few moments. The scenery from the Fort is diversified and grand, the steep bank falling abruptly two hundred and fifty feet. The soil is a sandy loam, of sufficient depth for vegetation, with coarse gravel beneath. Beautiful clear crystal springs are seen gushing out of the hill side, trickling down and forming little rivulets, and contributing to the waters of the Assiniboine. Across the beautiful valley, the opposite hills are clothed with aspen, balsam, poplar and birch, presenting different shades of colour. To the south the valley is visible for miles; the west bank covered with medium sized timber. A short distance from the fort, south, is seen a great valley, at right angles to the Assiniboine, fully half a mile wide and one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet deep, through which the largest river on the continent might flow. At the bottom, among the bushes, runs Beaver creek, only a few feet across. To the left, distant about two miles, the Qu'Appelle river joins the Assiniboine. The dry, naked, arid hills, north of Qu'Appelle, present a great contrast to those of the Assiniboine. To the west there are rich table lands, with occasional beautiful copses of wood, thickening the nearer they approach the Qu'Appelle river, till they become quite a forest of valuable timber. The main fording place is a short distance north, above the confluence of the Qu'Appelle with the Assiniboine. At low water it is not over five or six feet in depth, over shifting sand. The half breed freighters when going to Carleton, Battleford or Edmonton, generally ford the

river at this place, and it happens when the river is swollen that animals are sometimes carried away with the current. The fort is reached from the place of our encampment on the flats up the hill-side by a well-made road, but in places it is almost at an incline of 45° and difficult to climb. Here we received an introduction to Mr. A. McDonald, chief factor for Swan River district. This district embraces Swan River, Riding Mountains, Pelly, Egg Lake, Touchwood Hills, Qu'Appelle, and extends west to the Cypress Hills. The company hold large limits in the neighbourhood of their forts, in the aggregate 50,000 acres, and a further interest of one-twentieth of the whole territory. The fur trade is on the decline, and the only true interest of the company is ordinary trade, and the sale of lands to *bonâ fide* settlers. Providing Government lands were settled upon by a class of good settlers, the lands of the company would be enhanced in value. Mr. McDonald is a strong advocate for developing the resources of the North West by the construction of railways. At the Fort we met Dr. Hagarty, late of London, Medical Inspector for the North West. He had just arrived from Fort Pelly for the purpose of inoculating the Indians and their families, who had gathered in large numbers at Fort Ellice to receive their annual pay from the Government, under Treaty No. 4. Small-pox makes fearful havoc among the natives. If this disease gets among them, very few escape. Indians are seldom seen marked with the small-pox, for the reason that they rarely recover. The spread of this disease is hardly to be wondered at, as the Indians make no effort to counteract it. Their habits are filthy, and whether sick or well, they all lie huddled together in a small space. As soon as one dies, the clothes and blankets are taken and worn by the others, without regard to consequences. I also met Mr. Wagner, P.L.S., who has been engaged since the treaty was made in 1874, in blocking out reserves for the Indians. The chiefs make their own choice of lands, generally bordering on some river or stream, usually eight by twelve miles square. Whenever they come under the terms of the treaty they are allowed a few cows and a bull, a yoke of oxen, waggons, ploughs and harrows, also seed grain. Some have taken to farming and made improvements, but as a rule they prefer a roving life.

On Sunday morning, 19th August, we attended a religious service held in the Fort. Archdeacon Cowley, an old and much respected missionary of 35 years' experience among the Indians, preached a practical sermon to half a dozen whites and a few Indians. We also attended service in the afternoon in one of the chief's wigwams. Mr. Pratt, a well educated Cree Indian, acted as interpreter. I understand that the Archdeacon is familiar with the Cree language, but prefers an interpreter when the opportunity offers. The chiefs

and a large number of their bands attended, and squatted on the ground inside the tent. The Indians conducted themselves in an orderly manner, and would frequently applaud the speaker with a grunt—hoh, hoh. The squaws were not admitted into the tent, poor creatures, they were all busily engaged dressing hides, repairing tents, making fancy bead work, or gathering fuel. The Indians are inveterate smokers, and the odour emitted from that horrid weed they smoke (the dried bark of the red willow, called kinnikanic) is very unpleasant. They smoked during the delivery of the sermon. A headman would fill a large stone pipe having a stem two and a half or three feet long, and this pipe was handed to the chief, who took a few graceful puffs and handed it to the next in rank, and so on round the circle. After the pipe returned to the chief, it was again replenished by the headman and sent on its mission of peace. The tent in which service was held was covered with buffalo robes, 24 in number on the lower tier. The poles coming together at top left scarcely any room for ventilation. The Indians sat round with a blanket or robe covering their loins, their bodies to the waist perfectly bare; many of the leaders were tattooed all over the breast.

After service, in company with Dr. Hagarty, we took a stroll around the tents. Near one we noticed a steam bath, in which were three strapping braves, who came out of the bath dripping with perspiration and sat naked upon the prairie till thoroughly dry. These baths are constructed with willow or poplar poles made in a half circle and both ends stuck into the ground. Over this frame-work buffalo skins are put, making it almost air-tight. They then heat stones which are put in the centre of the bath on the ground, on which they pour water till sufficient steam is produced. We frequently noticed the frame-work of baths in the vicinity of creeks. The Indians are very superstitious, have great faith in charms, and consider that there is virtue and efficacy in old relics. The medicine man, who almost rules supreme amongst them, practices great deception upon them by pretending that he can remove pain or disease from their bodies and transfer it to inanimate objects, such as sticks or stones. Their senses of smell and taste must be deficient, probably owing to the filthy food they eat. They will kill, skin, and eat a skunk as freely and with as much relish as they would a rabbit. Their sense of sight and sound are very acute the least rustling in the grass or upon the leaves in the bush is heard. They can see objects at great distances, and trace footsteps of men or animals for miles over the open prairie, where a white man could not discover the faintest indenation on the grass.

On Monday morning I accompanied Capt. McDonald, paymaster, to the Indian encampments. The natives gathered round his tent

like bees round a hive, anxiously waiting for their little pittance in money and provisions. The contractor having killed and distributed among them a dozen oxen that morning, the paymaster opened his cash box. The natives presented their little brass tokens, and received their respective amounts. The greatest harmony prevailed, although occasionally a little bickering would take place when claiming pay for so many wives and children. Polygamy seems to prevail to an alarming extent. Many have two three, or more wives and for each they are entitled to $5. The sum total paid foots up to precisely the same amount in the aggregate, whether the Indian has one wife or ten, but the moral effect is bad. In the evening numbers of the natives assembled in one of the chief's wigwams for the purpose of seeing Capt. McDonald present to the chiefs and headmen, new suits of clothing. One of the chiefs, named White Bear, a very corpulent, elderly man, requested Captain McDonald to allow him to present to his son, young White Bear, the suit designed for him; that he was getting feeble, and it was his desire and the wish of the whole tribe that his son should put on his mantle. Captain McDonald made an excellent and appropriate speech. The chiefs put off their robes, stood erect, and each made suitable reply. After this ceremony we all assisted in dressing the chiefs and headmen in their gaudy new attire, but failed to convince them of the utility of a pair of pants. The party afterwards escorted the captain in military style to his head-quarters at the Fort. We remained at Fort Ellice several days. Next morning we started on our way to Qu'Appelle. The main travelled road from Ellice is on the south side of the Qu'Appelle river, but, as we were informed, by going that road we would pass through a good deal of timber land, and that the road was rough, we concluded to take the Battleford trail to the forts, leading to Touchwood hills, and branch off south to Qu'Appelle. We gathered our forces together, Dr. Hagarty and guide and Mr. House and guide joining our party. Col. Richardson remained at the Fort, his horses were jaded out, and he could not proceed. For the first two miles we passed through groves of timber, down a graded road, cut along the side of the mountain till we arrived at the Qu' Appelle river, about a mile above its confluence with the Assiniboine. The river is skirted on the south bank with a healthy growth of timber. On the west side the land is sterile and scarcely anything can grow. The naked sandy hills forming the back ground show a great contrast to the rich valley of the Assiniboine. Nothing seems to thrive, even the trailing juniper vines can scarcely gather moisture sufficient to grow. Our animals were almost used up in dragging our loads over this bed of sand and up the side of the mountain. Near the summit we saw several good springs, but the water was

soon sucked up in the sand below. After scaling the sand hills, the land improves. We found a light sandy loam, on which there is a good sward, but nothing compared with the rich luxuriant grasses further east. Occasionally we found small patches of wood, but the general aspect of the country for many miles to the north is open prairie, and not very well suited for settlement. The road was splendid, and we drove at good speed and camped for dinner near a beautiful salt lake on which were abundance of ducks and geese. Having tasted the waters we found them alkaline, but quite near we discovered a good supply of fresh water. The soil improved as we advanced to the west. Late in the evening we crossed Cut Arm Creek, a small clear stream of 25 feet wide—the valley large as usual, and the banks receding a considerable distance from the stream and very high. The eastern bank was denuded of timber and the west bank clothed to the water's edge. The land is very rich in this locality, and there is an ordinary supply of timber. We pitched our tents for the night alongside of a rich meadow, with grass several feet high. Early next morning we proceeded on our journey, passing through a large tract of burned timber. Thousands of acres had been destroyed the previous year. In the afternoon we reached the open prairie or plain, with not a tree or shrub to be seen. The day was warm; my thermometer stood 82° in the shade, but we had generally in passing over the plains refreshing breezes. The nights were cool and pleasant and our sleep very refreshing. Taking an early start the trail was very indistinct, for we had the previous evening left the Battleford trail, taking a nearer route across the country to Qu'Appelle. We travelled over rolling prairies and rich bottom lands. There was a uniformity or sameness in every day's journey; no prominent hills or landmarks; no extensive swamps, with creeks or rivers to ford; no variety, but a continuation of level or rolling prairie for days; neither man nor beast to be seen save only a badger, an occasional fox, the little gopher, sitting erect at the mouth of his hole, and a few prairie chickens and ducks. There is something very monotonous in such travelling. The eye and mind feel anxious for change—some diversity of scenery. These extensive treeless plains cannot be utilized unless disposed of in large limits for grazing purposes. Men of capital, such as the younger sons of the large landed proprietors in Britain, where the laws of primogeniture deprive them of participating in any portion of the entailed real estate, should be encouraged to utilise them. Such men might take a fancy to procure extensive limits for stock-raising on a large scale, and keep numerous shepherds and herdsmen to take charge of the stock. Any quantity of hay could be easily cured and carried to some sheltered ravine, or along the banks of some stream, where quantities of timber for building fences and for

fuel could be secured. The destructive annual fires could soon be checked; and, by planting, plenty of trees could be grown, or, if protected, I believe a natural growth would rapidly spring up. The growth of forests would cause greater rainfall. I am persuaded that a plantation properly cared for in the North-west would grow more rapidly than in Britain. The trees might not in the North-west attain the size, but would grow sufficiently large for all practical purposes. At noon we camped on Pleasant Hill, where we found both wood and water. The thermometer at noon 75° in the shade. We travelled over a lovely plain in the afternoon.

Late in the evening we were at a loss to find water. The doctor galloped from side to side of the trail, through willow bushes and low lands in search, but we were doomed to disappointment for some hours. About dark we noticed the doctor floundering in the mud. In this filthy bog we found a little water of the consistency of gruel, which we filtered, and camped for the night. We were not regular in partaking of our meals, for this depended entirely on circumstances, where we could get wood and water. Wherever we got a good supply of wood we usually cooked game procured by the way, otherwise we satisfied our hunger with a lunch composed of canned meats and fruit, bread and boiled ham. Next morning we made an early start before breakfast, purposely to obtain water for ourselves and animals, and had not proceeded over two miles when we saw a beautiful lake literally covered with ducks and geese and other water fowl. Among the sedges around the borders we saw numerous cranes and bitterns as tame as domestic fowls. A drive of 15 miles over a beautiful country, with fine natural groves and clumps of valuable timber, brought us to the brow of the hill overlooking the valley of Qu'Appelle. On the flats were planted promiscuously over 500 wigwams. Descending into the valley by a winding trail nearly as steep as the roof of a house, we reached the level, and were at once beset by a score of hungry Indian curs. We instinctively felt for our revolvers, and were about giving some of the miserable creatures a quietus, but on second thought we concluded it was much better not to show fight, as the odds were against us.

LETTER VIII.

The Aborigines and their Peculiarities—Their Love of Trinkets—Bedecking a Chief—Loud Voice and his State Procession—The Calumet of Peace—Demanding the Supplies—An Indian Oration—The Supplies Furnished—A Horse Stampede—Ravenous Curs—An Artist and his Long Voyage—Reflections, &c., &c.

I closed my last communication when entering Qu'Appelle. Scores of hungry curs followed us to our tent, and during the night they kept prowling round and eating almost everything that was movable, even a portion of the harness, and would have demolished my dog had we not taken him into the tent. The Indians were also on the *qui vive*. Having taken me for the pay-master, they concluded that their rations would be forthcoming the following morning, and no doubt had come to the conclusion to sit up all night, have a general feast, and make a clean sweep of the balance of their supplies. They danced and yelled the whole night to the monotonous hum-drum of the tom-tom. The result was we had little or no sleep, and felt indisposed next morning. The valley, a short distance east of the Fort, is fully two miles in width. To the east and also west of the Qu'Appelle the mountains encroach upon the bottom lands. The valley becomes much contracted, and at both ends are lakes of from five to eight miles in length and from one to two in width. It is supposed that the South Saskatchewan at some period of this world's history poured its large volume of waters down the Qu'Appelle valley into the Assiniboine. This great valley has evidently been the channel for a much larger river than the Qu'Appelle, as water levels or steppes are observable on the hill sides. Some now advocate the project of turning the waters of the South Saskatchewan into the channel by cutting a canal through the sand bar formed at this great bend at the head waters of one of the branches of the Qu'Appelle river, a little to the northwest of thunder breeding hills. Some think that these waters could be diverted down this valley for $20,000, and if done the Assiniboine would be navigable from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice, and the Qu'Appelle river would also be navigable for 240 miles further west than Fort Ellice. Should this work ever be accomplished, I think the additional volume of water might flood an extensive tract of valuable land between High Bluff and Headingly. This year's freshets in the Assinboine backed up the waters around Baie St Paul, making the main road impassable for the greater portion of the summer months; and to divert the waters of the South Saskatchewan down this course would add fully 100 per cent. to its volume. Another consi-

deration is the effect this would have upon the navigation of the Saskatchewan, from the Forks near Prince Albert mission down to Grand Rapids to Lake Winnipeg. I am persuaded the Government will find sufficient outlet for all their available funds in developing the resources of this great country, without undertaking to change the course of rivers. About 40 miles west of Qu'Appelle, the river forms two distinct branches. Large tracts of land between these respective branches, and on both sides of these rivers for miles, are good and fit for settlement. South of Qu'Appelle we find the great Souris plain. The land of this, I am informed, is good, but totally denuded of timber, excepting a little skirting the Souris river. Some ten miles from the Hudson Bay Fort at the east end of a lovely lake, we noticed the Roman Catholic mission and a few half-breed settlers, who have brought several acres under cultivation. The crops were good, more particularly the roots, which were excellent. The Qu'Appelle river flows sluggishly out of the west into the eastern lake, passing close to the Hudson Bay Fort. The Fort is surrounded by a stockade, and within the enclosure are the officers' residences and several good storehouses. Across the river are the barracks of the Mounted Police. Only five members of that body were stationed at Qu'Appelle, under command of Capt. Grisbach. At the south end of the valley, Dr. Schultz, M.P., and Dr. Bain have erected one of their trading posts. The whole flats between these points are dotted with Indian camps—over 500 in number. We also saw numerous tents and stalls erected by transient traders. The natives are passionately fond of trinkets, such as brass rings, pipes, beads of various colours, ribbons and rich coloured blankets, and should they take a fancy to an article, no matter how useless, they will purchase it at a great sacrifice of furs. They would barter several buffalo robes for a horse bridle mounted with tin or for a curious headed pipe worth a quarter. The older members of the bands are not so easily caught; they have lost confidence in the transient traders, and prefer dealing with the North-West company or in Hudson Bay stores, and should the Indians be unsuccessful in their hunting excursions and require supplies of credit, they have no other alternative but to apply to those companies for assistance, and many are relieved from want and actual starvation every winter. There is one good feature in reference to payment. No order or account will be accepted by the paymaster. The Indian must receive his money supplies himself. This prevents fraud or any undue advantage being taken, and keeps them from purchasing on credit. I did not at this time feel very well and Dr. Hagarty and Mr. McLean insisted upon my removing out of my tent to the Fort, where I received the hospitality of the latter gentleman and Mrs. McLean.

A little incident that occurred had the effect of arousing me. The report of firearms and great noises were heard, as if bedlam had been let loose. I naturally fancied that Sitting Bull had arrived with his braves, as was expected, for his encampment was only distant some sixty miles south-west of Qu'Appelle, at Old Woman's Lake. I jumped out of bed and made my way to the entrance gate. And sure enough fully 200 Indians had formed a procession, headed by their chief Kaw-kee-shi-way, or as he is usually called, "Loud Voice." The old chief was sitting in a cart drawn by a single horse, and alongside of him was his head man. The day being warm, he had thrown off his blanket, and his body was perfectly nude. His face was painted red, and his head was ornamented with large eagle's feathers. The procession halted a short distance outside the Fort, keeping up their hum-drum song, hi-hi, he-he, and firing off guns and shouting. Mr McLean informed me that Kaw-kee-shi-way was an old chief, and wielded great influence among the natives. He was at all times a man of peace, and friendly to the Hudson Bay officials, and it was customary for them to flatter him by making him an annual present of a suit of clothes and the calumet or pipe of peace. He was now brought down to the Fort by his followers for the clothing, but as he had noticed that the Hudson Bay flag was not hoisted on the Fort, he considered it beneath his dignity to approach nearer unless this little attention was paid to him. Accordingly Mr. McLean instructed his officers to comply with the wishes of the chief, and then the procession entered, and a gaudy suit and jaunty hat trimmed with ribbons of many colours—the handiwork of Mrs. McLean—were produced. The ceremony of presenting the suit, &c., was then gone through with, and the calumet sent round on its mission of peace and good will. Afterwards the Indians received their supplies in their blankets.

During the same day, another and much more dangerous procession was formed. A council was held, resolutions passed, and a deputation appointed to interview the Hudson Bay officer, and demand supplies. Capt. Macdonald, paymaster, had not arrived from Touchwood Hills. The appointed time for payment was not up for two days, but the natives expecting his arrival before, had used up all their supplies. The deputation made their demand on Mr. McLean, who stated that the company had no authority to furnish supplies, and no security for getting paid, should they feel disposed to do so. They then returned for further instructions, and in a few hours afterwards came again, and made a threat that if the supplies were not forthcoming within the space of two hours, they would take forcible possession of a dozen oxen and other things belonging to the contractor. There was nothing to prevent their carrying out this threat if they felt disposed. The only available force within

hundreds of miles to oppose them were about a dozen whites, with five members of the Mounted Police. It was reported that 150 braves were mounted, prepared to carry out their evil design should their demands be not complied with. However, Mr. McLean concluded to grant the supplies rather than see them taken by force. Hundreds of these Indians and their families had been waiting for weeks for the paltry pittance they were to receive. Many were reduced almost to starvation, notwithstanding the lakes near by were stocked with a plentiful supply of fish, and the ponds and rivers literally covered with fowls. The following morning Capt. Macdonald arrived, pitched his tent, on which was promptly hoisted the British flag, and intimated that he was ready to fulfil the terms of the treaty. The natives gathered round the paymaster's tent in great numbers and Oh-Oh-Shope was chosen spokesman. The burden of the plaint was that the provisions they had received were not up to the mark in quality or quantity. Captain Macdonald listened patiently to the complaints, which he said were purely imaginary. He told them that he received his appointment from the Queen, the Great Mother, whom they had so much respect for. The Queen had made ample provision for them, and they would receive it honestly; Indian blood flowed through his veins as well as through theirs; he was a half-breed Saulteaux, and he would give them all they were entitled to receive; during the past two weeks he had paid large numbers of their people at Fort Ellice and Touchwood Hills, and they were all well satisfied. The captain spoke firmly and decidedly, and it had its effect upon the natives. Day after day this state of things continued, the chiefs keeping in their tents and having their dog feasts, and the orators and speakers pestering the paymaster until his patience was almost exhausted. One morning the headmen brought each a bundle of sticks, and laid them down in separate piles before Capt. Macdonald for him to count. These bundles represented the number of souls in the respective bands. The whole was considerably over 5,000.

Ultimately they yielded, when they found that the captain was firm, and agreed to accept of their pay. The crier was then commissioned to proclaim the tidings that the great chiefs were about to form in procession and meet the ambassador of their Great Mother to receive their pay, and inviting all to come and hear the words of wisdom from the great chief. Each band had its flag and they assembled on the broad prairie, formed a large procession with some fourteen banners and marched up to the paymaster's tent, singing and firing of guns. Arrived at the tent they squatted on the ground according to their rank, the minor members and squaws in the rear, and remained as silent as the grave for about half an hour. At last Chief Kaw-kee-shi-way, or Loud Voice, rose, stalked slowly up to

the Captain, shook hands with all of us and made a speech. He said:—The great man whom the Great Mother sent to us some years ago gave us plenty to eat. He told us to keep our ears open. I saw then what our Great Mother gave us, and promised us. Our Great Mother told us to try hard and sustain her. We have done so Now we ask for our Great Mother to be charitable. You see all our chiefs, and headmen and people around. We want more supplies. I am in a hurry to tell you this." Then he sat down. Loud Voice wields great influence among his people. He is a ventriloquist, though he does not know it. Loud Voice has selected his reserve at Crooked Lakes, Qu'Appelle river. Ke-was-ta-howe and several others followed in a similar strain. The Indians claim the exclusive right to the soil, look upon themselves as the sole proprietors and cannot understand the propriety of the Government paying the Hudson Bay Company for lands that they claimed belonged to the Indians. Some of them seem to think that the money paid to the Company will yet be refunded to them. After hours spent in talk, Loud Voice walked up to the tent and agreed to accept of his money which was counted out, some $95, but when in the act of taking it up other chiefs and headmen interfered and prevented him. The poor old man withdrew in disgust, and squatted upon the grass. Oh-shope, the orator, wanted all he had said put on paper and given to our Great Mother, and if what they wanted was not granted the paymaster need not come back next year.

Ultimately Loud Voice came up and took his pay, all went along smoothly, some seventy or eighty oxen were shot on the prairie and dressed for them, all the supplies furnished by the Government contractor were distributed, and the Hudson Bay Company had to furnish 25,000 lbs. of pemmican, 300 or 400 sacks of flour, and other articles, in order to satisfy this unusual gathering of the natives. Several of the chiefs have selected their reserves, and are making preparations to become permanent settlers, but I have little hopes of their becoming prosperous and successful agriculturists, more particularly those advanced in years, so long as the buffalo and other game are easily procured. We noticed some 28 or 30 Sioux camps. This tribe are not entitled to any money or supplies, yet on these occasions they usually get a share with the rest. The Sioux have been on our side of the line for 17 years, since they were driven over after the Minnesota massacre. This tribe have a reserve of about 8000 acres at Oak River, 80 acres to each family, and about 7000 at Bird Tail Creek. I noticed many half-breeds claim their right under the treaty, and are entitled to similar consideration as the Indians, providing they abandon their right to the land scrip or their portion out of the 1,500,000 acres set apart expressly for them. Several Indians who had not previously come under the treaty, and were en-

titled to $12 for the first year, 1874, and $5 each year since, have no check, and it is difficult to ascertain whether they are our own people or Indians from the other side of the lines. The paymaster was nearly imposed upon by several Paddling Indians from the other side, who claimed pay, but Captain Macdonald found out the deception in time. Mr. Heppler and Mr. Bell, two drovers, had driven from Montana some 80 horses, intending to take them to Winnipeg for sale, and had brought them within a few miles of Qu'Appelle, when the horses were set on by dogs belonging to those Paddling Indians, causing a general stampede. The drovers rode after the drove for weeks, and only succeeded in gathering up about one-third of them. These Montana drovers are very expert with the lasso. They can throw it with great precision and catch almost any horse on the run. The lasso is made of rope, hare or hide, with a noose at one end. This end they hold in the right hand, with the slack coiled in the left. They whirl the noose round their head a few times and throw it over the animal's head, and with the assistance of the horse they ride on, which is generally well trained to such work, they will soon pull the animal off its feet and secure it. The drovers and others were nightly annoyed by prowling Indian dogs stealing provisions out of their tents. They said they shot several. Almost every morning, dead dogs would be lying round everywhere, but the carcase would be taken and eaten by the natives during the day. On one occasion during our stay one of the half-breed traders was driving across the prairie with a mare and colt; the dogs attacked the colt and actually killed and ate it up in the owner's presence. At Qu'Appelle we met an English artist, who had been sketching in the neighborhood for several months. He was fond of fishing, and was usually very successful. His canoe was made of cedar, very light, and was covered with oil canvas. Into this diminutive craft he packed his bedding, clothing, ammunition, etc., and started to sail down the river Qu'Appelle to its confluence with the Assiniboine, thence down the Assiniboine to Winnipeg. He calculated the trip would take two months, the canoe by water being probably over 1,000 miles.

While roaming over the vast prairie noticing the numerous tents with which it is dotted, whose inmates were lounging about doing nothing but eating and smoking, dependent upon the paltry pittance dealt out to them, I wondered how long this state of things could last.

LETTER IX.

Another Chapter on the Aborigines—Their Fondness for Stimulants—Reckless Slaughtering of the Buffalo—Its Early Extermination Probable—Luxuriant Crop of Hops—The Touchwood Hills—Dried up Lakes—Scarcity of Water—&c., &c.

My last communication was descriptive of Indian life, customs and habits. It is a great blessing the traffic in intoxicating liquors is prohibited in the North-West Territory. The Indians are passionately fond of liquor, and would sacrifice the last article they possessed for spirits. Even now in the absence of intoxicating drinks, they frequently indulge in doses of pain-killer, and at some of their carousals enormous quantities of black tea are boiled, in which they put a small plug of tobacco for the express purpose of inducing intoxication. Unprincipled traders are in a great measure responsible for the many murders, strife and domestic troubles, that so frequently arise among the Indians. American traders cross the lines with a few gallons of alcohol, and by the introduction of water and poisonous drugs, manufacture hundreds of gallons of liquor. The presence of the Mounted Police is a great check to this evil; and many rascally speculators have been ferreted out and brought to punishment. Our stay in Qu'Appelle was protracted much longer than we anticipated owing to my illness, and the manner in which the payment to the Indians was proceeded with. I was anxious to learn from personal observation the character and habits of the aborigines, who fare sumptuously on pemmican, etc., occasionally, but who frequently undergo partial starvation. Their means of subsistence for a great portion of the year is the buffalo. Their food and scanty supply of clothing come chiefly from that animal, which is yearly becoming more scarce. Tens of thousands are recklessly and wantonly slaughtered, frequently for sport without even utilizing one single particle for food. Thousands more are slaughtered for their hides and tongues. The Indians carry on the chase for the maintenance of themselves and families, and when successful will pitch their tents and live upon the fruits of the chase till their supplies are exhausted. They then sally forth for a fresh supply, but the half breeds and hunters carry on indiscriminate slaughter so long as there is a buffalo to be found. Recently laws have been enacted for preventing this wholesale slaughter, but the territory is so extensive that it will be found difficult to enforce them. In our travels we often saw well-beaten tracks made by the buffaloes in crossing the prairies, generally leading to the margin of some river or lake. They frequently change their pastures from the dry

uplands to low meadows. On the uplands in summer they enjoy the pure breezes, and escape the torture from flies, but in winter they resort to the high grass and woody copses, which afford protection from the bleak winds. Large herds of buffaloes formerly roamed over the prairies as far east as the Province of Manitoba, but now they are scarcely ever seen east of the Touchwood Hills, and very rarely even in that locality. Their haunts are the great plain of the Souris, and along the United States boundary, around Cypress Hills and the Blackfeet country, extending north to Edmonton and east to the great bend in the South Saskatchewan near Thunder-breeding Hills. Another quarter of a century and this noble animal will be exterminated and become totally extinct unless some more rigid means are adopted to prevent indiscriminate and wanton butchery. The untutored Indians also must be educated and taught to earn a livelihood by cultivating the soil, or they will pass away and be annihilated before the march of white settlers. All they require is the will and proper instruction. They are endowed with health and strength to undergo labor, and the certain return of the fruits of honest industry should be sufficient stimulus to induce them to abandon the exposure and uncertainty of the chase.

Having taken a parting farewell of Mr. McLean and our friends at the Fort we crossed the Qu'Appelle River with considerable difficulty. Wending our way up through a natural ravine to the summit, we were astonished at the luxuriant growth of hops. Every tree and shrub was twined round with the vines, and the blossoms were much larger than any I ever saw in an artificial state. The deep rich soil and the sheltered position were favourable to their growth. After scaling the hill-top numerous trails lead in various directions. We were at a loss to determine which to take. However, we selected the trail to the left, running for a time almost parallel with the river, and passing through numerous copses or groves of poplar and aspen, with natural cleared patches between, averaging from 20 to 50 acres each, with occasional patches of meadow lands, yielding abundantly of hay. I wondered why these lovely locations were not taken up and brought under cultivation, to become the happy homes of hundreds who are struggling to obtain a livelihood in our thronged cities and towns. After travelling six or eight miles the timber grows less and more scattered. Passing numerous lakes, on which were ducks and geese in abundance, we shot several, but failed to procure them. During the day we were almost bewildered with numerous trails, winding round bogs or muskegs. On one occasion we lost the trail, and taking my pocket compass I discovered that we were travelling north-east instead of north-west. Tacking round across the prairie, we soon struck the old trail. We saw several wolves during this day's march, of a reddish-grey color. The prairie wolf resembles

the Esquimaux dog, and is a sneaking, wild, keen-scented animal. My son frequently shot at them, but the effects didn't seem to lessen their speed. The land in this vicinity was undulating, and in places hilly. We travelled during the day 35 miles, and in the evening we camped near Child's Mountain, a spur of the Little Touchwood Hills. The waters of the little lake adjoining was somewhat dark, but drinkable. We took an early start next morning, and in a few hours arrived at an Indian or half-breed encampment. All the males were out hunting buffalo on the plains for their winter supplies. One of the half-breeds had the previous day killed a stray buffalo bull. Aged bulls are often found at great distances from the herd—occasionally three or four together, and are easily slaughtered.

A short distance beyond we arrived at the English church mission, under the charge of Rev. Joseph Reader. The mission buildings stand on the brow of a hill, fronting a beautiful little lake. The missionary has under cultivation a few acres, and the vegetables and roots in the garden were excellent. Several half-breeds reside in the neighborhood and cultivate small patches. The Government furnished them with grain and potatoes. The soil is a rich loam. The vegetables were much earlier than I expected, and of extraordinary growth. I mounted a ladder or frame scaffolding attached to the stockade of the mission, and from the observatory I obtained a magnificent view of the surrounding country. To the south and south-west I looked across an extensive prairie, with occasional elevations or hills dotted promiscuously here and there, as if to embellish the scenery, and away beyond the view extends to the valley of Qu'Appelle. The last mountain is also seen to the south-west, but distant many leagues from the position it is represented on the map. To the east among the trees can be seen the mission school house, kept by Mr. Settee. Away in the west, Heart's Hill is seen towering above all the rest, and, far beyond, the great salt plains. The whole country presents a lovely appearance; abundance of good timber, sufficiently large for building purposes, is seen to the north of the mission.

On my return trip I travelled over the north portion of the Great Touchwood Hills, and found the very best description of rich agricultural lands. A tract of country nearly the size of the Province of Manitoba could be brought under cultivation. Rev. Mr. Reader seems perfectly contented with his isolated position, shut out from society and civilization. He complains, however, that there are no regular postal privileges. It is only by chance that he can correspond with his friends and acquaintances. The previous day he had received a letter from a relative residing in England, bearing date July, 1876, it having been over 13 months in reaching its destination. No doubt this minister of the gospel is doing good work among these

benighted people, and it is to be hoped that ignorance, superstition and vice will ultimately give place to intelligence and honest industry. From the mission to the old fort, or to the cross-roads where the old fort formerly stood, the road is over hilly lands, with many lakes between. Many of the little hills are rounded, and run up almost to a point. Along the base and scattered about we saw numerous boulders, brought from the north during the glacial period. Descending from the old Fort, we arrived at two beautiful lakes. At the one on the left a half-breed trader had watered his horses and cattle, but had discovered too late that the waters were alkaline. Two of his oxen were sick on account of the water. We could have camped in the same place, for night was approaching, had it not been for the water. We, however, proceeded on the journey, and had gone only about a mile when we camped near a small fresh water lake, and in the vicinity of plenty of good dry wood. The timber is principally poplar, with birch interspersed. These numerous groves and rounded eminences or hills, fringed with timber at the base, form a lovely landscape. The Touchwood Hills are elevated several hundred feet above the great salt plain, and border it on the west. Early next morning we took a stroll to view several lakes in the neighbourhood. After breakfast we proceeded towards the plains over a beautiful tract of country, having a descent to the north-west. The timber gradually became thinner as we approached the plain, terminating in willow bushes. We provided ourselves with a supply of wood for cooking purposes, and entered upon our journey across this treeless prairie. The road crossing this salt plain was excellent, and we travelled at considerable speed. The surface of this great plain is very irregular. Numerous depressions are seen where water once lay, but which are now overgrown with grass and weeds. Some contain water, but it is invariably salt. Many of these lakes are large, and the banks or borders, and even the road bed, are as white as chalk. Thousands of ducks are seen upon this salt lake, and they are apparently much tamer than they are in other places. Probably all who travel across this plain are, like ourselves, anxious to cross for the purpose of getting fresh water, and cannot afford to lose time in hunting. Many of these lakes are large and connected together. Some are very salt and bitter, while others are only slightly brackish. About three o'clock we arrived at a fresh water lake between two small hills, into which the horses and mules dragged their respective loads, for we considered it too early in the day to camp, and we had no fuel. With some difficulty we backed out and proceeded on our way. We soon passed over the prairie and drove through small poplars and willow bushes. We travelled till night, looking for water without success. We had neglected to fill our keg with water

in the afternoon, and the consequence was we were under the necessity of going to bed supperless, for to eat under such circumstances would only increase our thirst. Many of these lakes are filling up, and are overgrown with grass and weeds. We started the following morning at break of day, and after travelling five or six miles we noticed near the road a stone monument near a little lake of fresh water, on which some surveying parties had written their names. We followed their example, unharnessed our horses and mules, and gathering up a few brands left by other travellers, prepared our breakfast. The soil in this section is a rich dark sandy loam, with subsoil of fine white gravel. While partaking of our meal a large flock of ducks lighted on the pond; we fortunately bagged half a dozen, and started on our journey. During the forenoon we passed over a rich undulating prairie, but timber was very scarce, excepting for a few miles before reaching the fingerboard at the cross-roads. We noticed a few thousand acres with an ordinary supply of timber.

On arriving at the cross-roads, 77 miles from Touchwood Hills, Hudson Bay Fort, we took the Carlton and Battleford trail. The other trail leads to Carlton also. Crossing the Saskatchewan at Batosh, near the forks of the road, we noticed a permanent post planted on which was marked the latitude and also the longitude of the place, by D. E. Lucus, engineer in charge. About two miles to the right we noticed the telegraph line on the great Pacific Railway. Passing over a hilly prairie our trail ran for miles almost parallel with the telegraph line. After travelling for hours over mountain and glen, with not a tree or shrub in view, we arrived at a large salt lake, the borders free from grass excepting the small red weed which is usually found fringing the borders of salt lakes. Ascending the hill for a few miles further, we crossed under the telegraph line, which takes quite a curve at the crossing, and runs up a beautiful valley. The poles are all poplar and about sixty yards apart. Here we noticed another post marked by Lucus, 90 miles distant from Hudson Bay post, Touchwood Hills. We drove along a large plain for miles, in the hope of finding water, my son riding in advance looking up good camping grounds. Just about dark he noticed in the distance a white sheet of ground which he took for a lake, but on nearer approach discovered it to be a dried up salt lake, on which were standing hundreds of geese. We had now got to the outskirts of the treeless prairie.

Just before dark we met a small party of half-starved, miserable-looking natives. The juveniles were almost in a nude state. One of our party fired at a chicken that rose near the trail. The natives showed evident signs of fear, but soon returned and craved for something to eat. We gave them a supply, for which they seemed thankful. A short stage further and we arrived at Twin Lakes. Our camping ground was on the brow of a hill with a lake in

the valley beneath. On each side of us we found abundance of wood. The general appearance of the land in this section is long rolling hills, or waves, rich soil with limestone gravel subsoil. Here as elsewhere, prairie fires have destroyed large tracts of valuable timber. During the night our tent was almost lifted from its moorings. The wind was high, and for a short time blew with terrific force. The night was clear, the stars shone with remarkable brightness. The variation of the temperature between night and day was extraordinary. While pacing around my tent in the middle of the night comfortably clad and muffled up in my overcoat, my thoughts wandered to those half-starved naked Indians we had met the previous night, with no tent to shelter them from the storm. Their condition must have been wretched. They lead a precarious life. When they have plenty they are not sparing, and if in want suffer with fortitude. This letter carries us over 150 miles of country, a very large proportion of which is not adapted for settlement.

LETTER X.

Saline Lakes—Relics of Past Days—A Lovely Landscape—Crossing the Saskatchewan—Fort Carlton—A Prosperous Business in the Far West—Exorbitant Freight Charges—Improvements in River Navigation—The Seat of Government at Battleford—Parliament Buildings, &c.

Recommencing our journey from Twin Lakes, we passed over rolling knolls of poplar for a few miles, and entered an open plain, with long water stretches on our right. Around the borders of many of these lakes tons of sulphate of soda had accumulated; incrustations as clear as crystal could be gathered in loads. We were satisfied with a pickle bottleful which we carried home. At a considerable distance from the trail we noticed, floating on a good-sized lake, numerous large birds. On nearer approach we discovered that they were pelicans, but at such a distance that we failed to kill any. Walking along the banks, we came to a small copse. On a small island near by hundreds of buffaloes had been slaughtered. Their bones were scattered over the whole surface of the ground. Most probably the hunters had lain in ambush in the little grove, and, when the herd came to water, had slaughtered them, or they might have been surrounded by Indians or half-breed hunters on horseback. The herd having the lake in front, would not take the water, and consequently were forced to wheel around and face death. Leaving the prairie we entered a long stretch of what was a few years ago tolerably good timber land, but now is mostly destroyed

by fire. Passing through an undulating country, with soil of the best description, occasionally I rode up to the brow of an eminence near the line of travel, and, from such positions, open prairie, poplar groves, lakes and hills could be seen, but not a solitary settler. Our hope was to reach the South Saskatchewan that night, but our animals were tired, and as night was approaching, and there was every appearance of a storm, we hastened to the woods for shelter, and camped about four miles distant from the river alongside a little lake. Before we had time to pitch our tents the rain fell in torrents, and it was with some difficulty we succeeded in kindling a fire to cook our supper. The night was very cold, and next morning everything looked dismal. We were enveloped in a dense fog, and my companions, like myself, were not anxious to hunt up the horses in such darkness, being afraid of getting astray themselves. However, we had taken the precaution to put a bell on one of the horses, and we had not gone far when we heard the joyful sound. After preparing breakfast, we started for the river—two hours' drive. We arrived at the Ferry (Gabriel's crossing), and having no horn whistled for Gabriel, for we could not see 20 feet in front.

The Ferryman soon appeared, and made preparation for crossing. The boat was a flat-bottomed scow, roughly put together. Our animals were unhitched, the carriage and cart put in the centre of the boat, the mules on one side, the horses on the other. Gabriel gave instructions by signs and some doubtful French. The mules were very obstinate and troublesome to put on board. He had probably been more accustomed to oxen than mules and undertook to twist the tail of the mule. Instantly he received a kick below the ribs, in the portion of the body called by pugilists the "bread basket." Each [illegible] took to [illegible] with an unyielding oar, first keeping along the shore and working up stream; fortunately the wind was favourable, which counteracted the force of the rapid current. The river has a swift current, and is probably over 200 yards in width at low water, with an average depth of from 8 to 15 feet. The fee paid Gabriel was $1.50 for ourselves, horses and carriages. The course of the river from this crossing to its confluence with the north branch is north-east, and distant by the river probably 75 or 80 miles. The river banks are strewn with boulders, some of enormous size. We gained the summit by a steep, sandy, winding road. The banks are about 170 feet high and skirted with a growth of timber. Along the top we noticed several barren sandy knolls on which nothing seemed to grow except trailing juniper vines. The view from the hill-top was grand, the morning mist had cleared away and the rich valley could be seen for miles. Away down the river could be seen the southern outskirts of St. Laurent settlement, which I visited two weeks afterwards and will describe in a future

letter. Crossing a fine level dry prairie surrounded by woodlands; passing a few primitive settlers who had apparently just cast anchor and were preparing themselves a habitation before winter set in, we drove for two hours over rich productive lands, when we arrived at Duck Lake. These waters are slightly saline, but horses and cattle drink of them freely without any injurious effects. On the rising ground in front of the lake is the trading post of H. Stobert, of Winnipeg. The Indians of that section had two weeks before assembled at this post to receive their pay under the Treaty. The agent informed me that the natives were very much dissatisfied with the quality of the supplies furnished. I saw a bag of damaged flour that had a greater resemblance to unslacked lime than to flour. Most likely this was the worst sample, and had got wet in fording streams during the unusually wet season. I understand that the paymaster did not accept the beef cattle, but returned them to the contractor. The supplies furnished to the natives under a Treaty should always be delivered punctually, in good order and of good quality. Various massacres have taken place in the United States through the grasping, unprincipled disposition of the agents of the Government. Hundreds of poor, innocent settlers have been butchered in cold blood through dishonest contractors and paymasters. The Indians in this respect are more exacting than whites; every stipulation mentioned in the articles of a treaty must be faithfully carried out. A short distance beyond Duck Lake we noticed an Indian encampment, alongside of which were large tracts of land under cultivation. I examined the crops, both wheat and oats were excellent. The Indians had constructed a fence from this improved farm across the prairie for some considerable distance, and had hung a good gate across the trail. Several Indians made for the gate ahead of my horses, and muttered some unintelligible lingo. However, I passed through the gate, and shortly afterwards met a trader, who informed me that the Indians were dissatisfied with the supplies, and understanding that Governor Laird and family intended passing that way, had constructed this fence for the purpose of getting an interview. A few miles further travel and we arrived at the brow of the hill overlooking Fort Carlton.

The great River Saskatchewan can be seen winding its way down this rich valley for miles. Fort Carlton is near the foot of the hill, and is enclosed by a high fence. Within the enclosure are four buildings, each from 70 to 80 feet long, forming a square, and at the rear of the dwelling house is the retail store, in which there is a well assorted stock of goods, of almost every kind and description. This station is under the charge of Mr. James Clark, factor and general manager of the western district, which includes Carlton, Fort Pitt, Cole Lake, Battleford, Prince Albert, Fort la Corne, and stretch-

ing westward to the district of Arthabaska. It appeared to me remarkable that where there is abundance of good arable land so little is brought under cultivation. At this agency we only found enclosed about an acre, which was a good vegetable garden. We accepted the hospitality of Mr. Clark and remained at the Fort for two days. The ferryboat was undergoing repairs on which I had intended to cross, to proceed past Touchwood Hills to Battleford, and see that tract of country north of the river; but on account of my animals being sick, and understanding that Governor Laird was effecting a treaty with the Blackfeet and was not expected at Battleford before the middle of October, I concluded to take a northern course and examine the country down the river and Prince Albert's Mission. The North Saskatchewan is a much larger stream than the south branch. It is between 400 and 500 yards broad at Carlton; from 10 to 20 feet in depth; and runs with a swift current. This noble river is navigable from Lake Winnipeg or from the head of Grand Rapids, far beyond Edmonton. The Hudson Bay steamer *Northcote* made several successful trips during the present season, and carried immense cargoes to the various Forts along the river to Edmonton. This gives the Company a monopoly over other traders. Freight charges by land carriage from Winnipeg to Carlton are from 5½ to 6 cents per lb. A barrel of flour that cost $10 would readily sell at Carlton for $25. Freight charges are regulated at so much per lb., therefore a pound of nails would cost precisely the same for freighting as a pound of flour or pork. Mr. Clark and others have informed me that with an expenditure of from $10,000 to $15,000 the river could be made navigable for ordinary sized vessels from Grand Rapids to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The Hudson Bay Co. have this season constructed a steel steamboat at Grand Rapids, 100 feet in length by 18 feet beam, for the carrying trade between Carlton and Edmonton. This boat is of light draught, and was made by a firm in London, who are also engaged constructing similar vessels for navigating the rivers of Central Africa and Brazil. The Hudson Bay Co. have during this season constructed a railway across the portage connecting Lake Winnipeg with the Saskatchewan above Grand Rapids. These falls are a succession of rapids for several miles. Tobin Falls near Cedar Lake, and the falls at Fort la Corne consist of loose boulders which could easily be blasted and removed. Some dredging would be requisite at places where the waters of the river are subdivided by islands, shoals and sandbars. If these improvements were made, no doubt some enterprising individual or company would put on a line of steamers, which would reduce rates of freight and develop the resources of this great country rapidly. I met at the Fort Mr. Wm. McKay, agent at Fort Pitt, and others who

had just arrived from Battleford. They stated that Mr. Sutherland and his workmen had just completed the Parliament buildings, Governor's residence, offices, and residences for the several Government officials—some 22 buildings in all. They were reported to be finished in splendid style. These buildings would have been completed much earlier in the season had not the spring freshets carried away a portion of their building materials. Leaving Carlton on Saturday, 15th September, after ascending the hill we proceeded along the plateau through an open prairie for a few miles, and then entered a good growth of poplar. We encamped for the night near the pine woods, about 15 miles from Carlton.

LETTER XI.

Still Travelling Westward—The Districts Visited—Timber Limits—Land Speculators—The Kind of Emigrants needed—Luxuriant Crops—Flourishing Settlements—Rev. Father Foremont—The Church on the Hill, &c., &c.

On the morning of the 15th Sept. we continued our course along the table lands between the two great rivers—North and South Saskatchewan—uninterrupted by any change in the general appearance of the landscape. The most unobservant traveller could not but admire the country—partly wood and prairie, about equally divided—with the natural pea and vetch growing luxuriantly on the prairie, and their vines even climbing up the aspen and poplar in the little copses adjoining the trail. About 20 miles north from Carlton we entered a ridge of tolerably good pine and white poplar, not of that lofty growth and stately appearance we frequently find in parts of Ontario, but of such size and quality that the trees could be utilized for lumber and building material. They were from one to two feet in diameter, and many were of sufficient length to make two tolerable logs. This section of pine is from three to four miles in width, and extends nearly across the watershed between the two rivers. Several such strips are found north of the north branch. I noticed but a very limited quantity of pine timber, but I was informed that there were very extensive and valuable limits north and west of Battleford. The completion of the Pacific Railway from Fort William to Selkirk will open up an extensive pine section to the east of Rainy Lake and north of Lake of the Woods in Keewatin. Manitoba can then be supplied from the east, and the Saskatchewan and other settlements in the north-west from the west. The principal lumber and building timber used

about the city of Winnipeg are rafted from Pine River and Red Lake country, and Minnesota, and manufactured at mills in the city. I am of the opinion that in a very few years a large proportion of the dwelling-houses in Manitoba will be of brick, or concrete —gravel, sand and lime. A very superior quality of white brick is made in Winnipeg and is in general use. As for fuel there is abundance, if properly protected and guarded against the annual fires, which in many cases occur through the culpable negligence of Indian half-breeds and traders, who recklessly leave their camp fires burning, or intentionally set the prairie grass on fire with the view of getting sweeter grass the following season. The law should be enforced, and an example made of a few, by imposing a heavy penalty in money or a term of imprisonment.

The inexhaustible deposits of coal found along the North Saskatchewan west of Battleford, must in time become developed, and peat may be manufactured from the bogs, as in many parts of England, Ireland and Scotland. Instead of allowing the destruction of so much valuable timber, it would be much better for either the Local or Dominion Governments to grant bonuses or exemption from taxation for a number of years to settlers who plant and cultivate a few acres of timber. Such plantations would grow rapidly, and in a few years would embellish the landscape, and add materially to the comfort and convenience of the people. After emerging from the pine section we proceeded over rich rolling high lands, half wood and half prairie, with occasional patches of rich pasture or meadow lands, till we arrived at a small tenement or shanty, surrounded with a few fields under cultivation. I made my way to the house for the purpose of ascertaining our bearings, for we had noticed several trails leading in different directions. At the door stood a middle-aged man with his shirt sleeves tucked up, washing potatoes; another was kneading and baking scones in the hearth; a third washing, or at least wiping, the dishes. One stared me in the face and abruptly said: "Are you Mr. Trow?" I replied, "Certainly, but who are you?" His name was Joseph McFarlane, a carpenter and farmer, well-known to many of your readers, who formerly resided near Shakspeare, Ontario. He enlisted with the first volunteers and reached Manitoba with the company under Col. Wolseley. After knocking about for several years, he ultimately found his way to his present location and was now in possession of a good farm with some twenty-five or thirty acres improved. He had erected a good house and barn. His crops were excellent, and he was in a fair way of success. His farm was distant about a mile, but Mr. Findlay, Mr. Shearer, and himself, three old bachelors, frequently met together to pass away the time. They all acknowledged to me that the greatest boon I could confer upon them would be to send

each a wife. They were in the prime of life, in good circumstances, but looked a little untidy for want of suitable helpmates. This is a good chance for some of the "fair maids of Perth." Our friends complained of the grasping disposition of certain parties who were anxious to secure large limits of land in that locality. It is to be hoped that such a state of things will not be tolerated by the Government. We have already too much land locked up out of the reach of the honest settler. Let the country be subdivided into homesteads, and actual settlers be encouraged. Clerks, coachmen or butlers, are not required; either is it desirable to send out paupers from large cities and towns in Britain, but agricultural labourers, female domestic servants, and tenant farmers. For the next fifteen miles we passed over rich rolling prairie and timbered lands, the trail running near several beautiful fresh water lakes, on which were floating numberless ducks and other water fowl. We crossed several crystal steams of pure spring water, and arrived at the Southwestern limit of Prince Albert Settlement, which is scattered along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan for fully 25 miles.

This settlement was established some 14 years ago by the Rev. Mr. Nesbitt, a Free Church missionary, and has made rapid progress. The population has doubled within the last three years. It has now Wesleyan, Presbyterian and Church of England stations, and two good schools. The inhabitants are principally English and Scotch half-breeds, with a sprinkling of Canadians. Many of the settlers have large improvements, good substantial houses and outhouses, and are surrounded with all the elements of comfort. They had all the latest improved agricultural implements—mowers, reapers and threshing machines—freighted there at enormous expense. I travelled leisurely for days through the settlement. The crops were excellent, and nearly all were secured and stacked in good condition. The mission is situated 230 miles north of Fort Garry, by 320 west, or about 700 miles further north than the county of Perth. We must not rashly conclude, however, that its northern latitude is objectionable or injurious to the successful growth of crops. The mean temperature is not much lower in summer than it is in Ontario. The season of vegetation is shorter, but the days are probably two hours longer. Spring opens like a flower, and the land is at once fit for the reception of the seed. All crops come to maturity and ripen much sooner than in similar temperatures where the summer days are shorter. The settlers informed me that there is scarcely a day in winter when the weather is too cold for work with their usual clothing on. Their employment in winter is principally preparing fuel and fence timber. Many haul it for miles. I examined the crops of Messrs. Drever, Rasmas, Robertson, Isbister, McKay, McKenzie, Spencer, Turner and Miller.

The last-named gentleman removed three years ago from near Wroxeter, in the county of Huron, and now owns two excellent farms, on one of which he resides, above the river flats near the mission. There are probably 60 acres improved and under cultivation, and his intention is to break up as much more next season.

Mr. Miller stated that his wheat crop would certainly yield 40 bushels per acre; oats, 50; and barley the same. He had planted 30 bushels of potatoes, and I have never seen such a crop When we cleared away the tops from a few hills, and laid the roots bare, you would almost have come to the conclusion that some one had put in the hill a pailful of good, large, sound potatoes. He expected to realize for his potatoe crop at least $600. Wheat was selling for $2,25; oats and barley $1,50 per bushel. Potatoes last season were sold for $1,50, but he did not expect over $1 this year. The previous day he sold from a small patch in his garden 28 bushels of onions for $3 per bushel. The root crops were slightly nipped with frost on the night of the 16th September—the first frost of the season—but they were full grown and ready to be taken up, with the exception of turnips, which were not in the least injured. The Hudson Bay store and station are under the charge of Mr. Philip Turner, an open-hearted Scotchman. The station was open in 1867. While in Carlton I undertook the duty of mail carrier. I delivered my charge for distribution to Mr. Turner. The mail is delivered and carried gratuitously by Mr. Clark, of Carlton, and frequently weighs from 60 to 70 lbs. Carlton is at present the distributing point for all mails in this western section to English River district, numbering three posts and two Roman Catholic missions. Athabasca district, numbering 12 posts, the seat of an English and Roman-Catholic bishopric, and six outlying missions; McKenzie River district, numbering 17 posts and 9 outlying missions, and the general post to Battleford and points west and north. This mail could be carried every three weeks from Carlton to the mission for $250 or $300 per annum. The present mail route to Pelly may be abandoned, and a way station from Touchwood Hills to Qu'Appelle established, which could be carried for about the same price from Carlton to Prince Albert. Mr. McDonald, of Fort Ellice, in connection with the Mounted Police, would serve Pelly gratuitously. Prince Albert settlement demands postal privileges. It has a population of from 700 to 800, and is rapidly increasing in numbers. The surplus produce this season may amount to 15,000 or 20,000 bushels. Horned cattle and horses number from 8,000 to 9,000. There are in the settlement 14 reapers, and almost every farmer owns a mower. There are three good threshing machines, and waggons, buggies and carriages in abundance. Sheep and hogs are scarce, and there are but few domestic fowls, wolves and Indian

dogs being too fierce enemies to allow them to exist. Here I met Captain Moore, an Irish gentleman, who came out to the Rocky Mountains some years ago on a hunting excursion. He became fascinated with the appearance of this section, and cast his lot with the settlers. He has at enormous expense completed a steam flouring mill, saw mill and shingle machine. The machinery was manufactured by Messrs. Goldie & McCulloch, Galt. The freight charges to deliver them must have been two or three hundred per cent. over the original cost of the machines. Mr. Moore has shown a great amount of pluck and enterprise, and has expended a little fortune in developing this settlement. For gristing they take the same toll as in Manitoba, one-sixth of a bushel. Lumber sells at the mill for $35 and even $40 per 1,000 feet; shingles, $6,50 per bunch. Mr. Moore's chief sawyer is a son of Mr. Richard Manley, of North Easthope. Since my return his father has sold out his splendid farm and intends moving out in the spring to Prince Albert. We noticed in this settlement a water mill and also an antediluvian wind mill, both of which are doing but little business. The settlement extends some eight or 10 miles down the river beyond Captain Moore's mills. The river near the mission is about 500 yards in width and runs with a swift current, but the waters are divided by islands. Further to the north the river is more composed, and runs with a much swifter current about Cole's Falls, where it unites its large volume of water with its sister stream, the south branch. Nearly the whole of this tract of country between the two rivers is adapted for settlement, and if any encouragement is given to intending settlers it will, in a few years, boast of a dense population. I am not sanguine enough to believe that all who remove there will become rich, but I do believe that by industry, thrift and economy, all who remove, not only to this section, but to numerous others just as productive in Manitoba and the North-West, need not be poor. No person need have a doubt about the future prospects of this great country. In regard to climate or the productiveness of its soil, all who cast their lot on such lands have only to cultivate the soil in a workmanlike manner, and leave the result to Him who created these luxuriant and beautiful prairies. After a careful examination of Prince Albert settlement we crossed the country over to the south branch, and encountered some difficulty in fording our way over spring creeks and meadow lands. He camped for the night in view of Deer Hill, a splendid tract of good land. Next morning we wended our way over knolls with plenty of timber and some pine.

About noon we entered the French half-breed settlement of St. Laurent.

The soil here is much lighter than at Prince Albert. We drove from house to house for information respecting the crossing, but to

our astonishment the settlement was deserted, and the doors and windows were locked or nailed up. After many unsuccessful attempts along the numerous trails, at last we arrived at the mission and found Father Foremond at home—"monarch of all he surveyed." This gentleman was alone, the only male inhabitant that could be found for miles. Fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, absolutely all, excepting a few old women and small children, were away to the plains with their horses, cattle and dogs, hunting the buffalo and preparing their winter supplies. The younger members of the family take charge of the stock, the fathers and oldest sons chase and kill the buffalo, the mothers and daughters prepare the pemmican and dried meat, and tan and cure the robes. Many of these hunters are satisfied with supplies sufficient for the year; others remain longer and return with loads for sale to white settlers and traders. The French half-breeds are very indifferent farmers; they love a roaming, exciting life, are fond of the dance and assembling together for fun and frolic. There are certainly many exceptions, as some practical farmers are to be found among the half-breeds. These settlers easily procure all their supplies of buffalo meat, which constitutes their principal diet. This state of things cannot long continue, for the destruction of the buffalo will in a very few years lead to its extermination. I produced my credentials—a letter of introduction from His Grace Archbishop Taché—to Father Foremond, who very kindly invited myself and party to dinner. Letting out our animals we took a stroll through the church property, while the reverend father prepared the dinner, for he was a man of all work. Father Foremond is a devoted Christian minister; his very appearance would convince the most skeptical that he was sincere and devoted to his charge. The influence of Roman Catholic priests over the half-breeds and natives is great. Their intellectual attainments and devotion to the spiritual welfare of their flock command respect; while it is plain that they spend their lives for other than this world's goods. After dinner we were shown into the library, where we noticed a good collection of books in several languages, chiefly works on theology. The chapel is erected on the summit of the river bank, overlooking the residences of his parishioners for miles on both sides. In front of the church on a raised platform or triangle is hung a large bell, which can be distinctly heard for miles. Near the church we found an enclosed burying ground. Down in the dingle north of the house in a sheltered nook we saw a beautiful spring boiling up. Along the northern boundary there is a deep cut ravine, the work of ages of the little crystal stream that flows through on its way to unite with the waters of the Saskatchewan. There is a succession of falls on this stream; the pure living waters jumping from one rock to an-

other beneath, making an eligible location for a mill. A similar stream flows along the south-western boundary of the church property. Many of the half-breed settlers have large improvements. There are probably 100 families located in St. Clements and St. Laurent, and there is ample room for a thousand more. After leaving St Laurent we wended our way over a hilly, sandy, winding trail along the banks of the river. Several times we followed well-beaten trails down the slopes to the river in the hope of finding the ferry, but had to retrace our steps. After hours of toil we succeeded in reaching the ferry about dark, and in two trips we crossed with our horses and carriages. Next morning I held a conversation with the ferryman, Batosh, who is upwards of eighty years of age, and one of the earliest settlers. He said that his boys when they require buffalo, have to lose a week or two in order to get two or three. In his younger days he could pick one out of a herd passing along almost any day of the week, and on one occasion he shot 100 in one month for the tongues and robes alone. Mr. Batosh informed me that the river is stocked with a plentiful supply of well-flavored fish of different species—gold eyes and white fish, many weighing from ten to fifteen lbs. Very few are caught, the natives and half-breeds are so habituated to the flesh of the buffalo that they care but little for fish.

LETTER XII.

Roughing it on the Plains—Bears and Wolves—A Prairie on Fire—Governor Laird's Party en route for Battleford—The Mennonites—Dear Horse Feed at Touchwood Hills, &c., &c.

Leaving Batosh on the South Saskatchewan, on the 20th September, we drove for several miles over a miserable trail, cut up with deep ruts, and soon entered a strip of timber land, the soil being of the richest description, with abundance of luxuriant grasses. Emerging out of the woods, we noticed near the trail a permanent correction stake, on which was marked 52° 43½ north latitude, 106° west longitude. We passed numerous lakes, which, as usual, abounded with waterfowl of every description. Late in the evening we fell in with a party of half-breed traders and Indians, their carts being heavily laden with skins and pemmican. They were returning to Red River for their winter supplies and to dispose of the proceeds of the chase. After many fruitless attempts, examining every clump of willows and reeds for water, we discovered a small muddy hole, near which we camped for the night. This stagnant pond emitted a strong odor from decayed vegetable matter and swarmed with

myriads of animalculæ. After wading up to our knees in slush and mud, we managed to dip up a few pailsful for the animals, and strained a little for our own use. The days were very pleasant, but the nights cold; however, we slept very comfortably. Just about the gloaming we saw within range of the tent a bear prowling about, and heard wolves howling in the distance, but we slept undisturbed. Next morning we passed through alternate strips of timber and prairie, many valuable tracts being burned, and the bare dead trunks presenting a desolate appearance. Numerous fresh water lakes were seen along our line of route, presenting tangible evidence that the rainfall is sufficient for vegetation. Provided extensive settlements were made, these destructive annual fires would be checked, timber would grow rapidly, the climate be greatly ameliorated, and summer droughts and the scarcity of good water would be unknown. This extensive section of country, extending from the Saskatchewan River to a long range of hills near to the line of the Pacific Railway, probably sixty miles in width, is, with the exception of the Alkaline plains, all adapted for settlement, and I am persuaded before many years hundreds of the French half-breeds now residing along the Red River will remove out to the South Saskatchewan or St. Laurant, and extend their settlements from the river east to the line of railway. Scaling the mountain we put out our animals to graze on a dry meadow on the eastern slope, evidently the former bed of a lake. Scores of these depressions are seen, some with traceable outlets and even with deep cut trails, where numerous herds of buffalo had frequently gone to quench their thirst. On the summit of the highest cone of this range of hills was erected a cross. We climbed up the steep acclivity, and from the elevated position we had an extensive view of the surrounding country. Along the north side of the mountain, at its base, there is a succession of lakes, gradually growing less by the washing of sediment from the hill tops, and the growth and decay of vegetable matter. This mixture of soil makes the richest meadow or pasture lands. On these low meadows thousands of tons of hay could be cut yearly, and numberless cattle and horses fed at little expense.

We crossed the telegraph line on the Pacific surveyed line at an imaginary station named "Gotland," better known upon the maps than at the place it is supposed to be located. These stations are distant from each other eight or ten miles. All along the route sufficient land is reserved at each station for a town plot. We travelled along for miles over a treeless prairie, and camped for the night a few miles east of the cross-roads, where we found plenty of wood but no water. We kept up a good fire during the night, and rising with the lark we passed over a few thousand acres of good land with an ordinary supply of timber, then entered upon open

plains. During the day we found plenty of water, and expected to reach the fresh water lake at the west end of the salt plains at night, but we failed to get to the desired haven. During the night the wind arose, shaking the tent, and I awoke. The tent and surroundings were lighted up as clear as day. Jumping up and rousing my comrades we found the prairie on fire. The wind had fanned the embers, which we thought were extinguished, into a flame, which spread with great rapidity in the direction of our animals. We checked the flames with vigorous efforts, but had there been five minutes' delay, nothing could have prevented their spreading over the prairie, and we should have lost our animals. We took an early start for the fresh-water lake, and about an hour after sunrise we observed in the distance several animals grazing. The animals were the advance guard of Mr. Grant, a wealthy half-breed, who was on his way with Governor Laird's family to Battleford. Grant had contracted to carry the family, eleven in number, for $70 for each person, from Winnipeg to Battleford, the party furnishing their own provisions. He informed me that he would lose heavily by the contract unless he succeeded in getting freight for the return trip.

Making an early start next morning, we soon arrived at the western outskirits of the timber limits. In two days more we reached the Hudson Bay fort at Touchwood Hills, and examined a lovely portion of that section not seen or described on our way west. There are numerous fresh water lakes and sufficient wood for ordinary purposes, rich productive rolling lands, with room for tens of thousands of the surplus population of Europe. Could not the Dominion Government assist several thousands more of the Mennonite settlers, now in Southern Russia, to emigrate to these beautiful lands? They are certainly a most desirable class of settlers, and are anxious to remove to Manitoba or the North-West, if means of transportation were advanced to them, which they no doubt would repay in a few years. They dread the recent enactment that compels them to do military service in Russia after 1882. Those in possession of means in Russia are willing to pay the passage of their poorer brethren, providing the Canadian Government guarantee the repayment of the passage money. Under the present disturbed state of Russia, and the financial troubles, real estate is very much depreciated in value. Their farms are considered Crown lands, notwithstanding they have been in possession of their forefathers for nearly two centuries. They cannot sell without permission from the Emperor, and even then only on condition that they sell to Mennonites, and pay into the public treasury ten per cent. of the sum realized. The depreciation of their currency is also a great drawback; a Russian rouble, which should be worth 63 cents, only bringing 45 cents. The soil in the neighborhood of Touchwood Hills is a rich allu-

vium, mixed with sand, which retains moisture. Sandy soil like that of many of the Western States—only adapted for the culture of corn—sucks up the moisture like a sponge, but a union of soils, such as we found at Touchwood Hills and many other parts west, combines both qualities. One withstands a drought and the other gives an immunity against wet weather. Leaving Touchwood Station we travelled over an undulating country for some 20 miles, and camped over night in company with Captain Moore of Prince Albert, who was returning home from Winnipeg with supplies, etc. Next day's travel was over similar lands, all adapted for settlement. A person blindfolded could not fail to select an eligible location. Towards night we were overtaken with a slight snowstorm. After pitching our tent, Mr. Hugh Sutherland, Government manager of public works at Battleford and Fort Francis, overtook us and camped for the night. The night was very stormy and bitterly cold, snow and sleet falling, and in the morning the trees and bushes were drooping with icicles. We were in an uncomfortable mood, not having much experience of gipsy life. Our horses were missing, having broken loose during the storm, and after considerable search we found them hid in a poplar grove for shelter. We fed our animals with a bushel of oats we had purchased at Touchwood Hills for $2.50. Nothing remarkable occurred worth describing for the next 200 miles. The weather was all that could be desired for this season of the year. We reached Tanner's Crossing on the Little Saskatchewan on the evening of the 1st October, in the midst of a snowstorm. Next morning the ground was covered with three inches of snow. When taking breakfast two young men—English half-breeds—came to our tent. The poor fellows had no tent, no provisions, and no gun, they had fed themselves upon promises for a day or two, and had slept under their cart with only one buffalo robe for their covering the previous stormy night. They were on their way to Kildonan, after a trip to the Rocky Mountains. The road having become almost impassable we delayed a day and took a stroll through the settlements. This is a desirable location. Many have taken up land this season, and the crops were all secured in good condition. Old settlers informed me that they have generally a little snow or rain about the latter part of September, but it always disappears in a few days, and afterwards there is fine, pleasant weather, Indian summer, for a month or six weeks. This was certainly the case this season, for I remained in the province several weeks and the weather was delightful. It is very questionable if there is a healthier country on the face of the globe than the North-West. It is not subject to fevers or epidemics, such as are very prevalent in the Western States. Many medical men who settled in Manitoba with the intention of following their profession found no

practice. They abandoned physic and engaged in other avocations. There are often to be found more medical men in some of the towns in Western Canada than there are in Manitoba and the whole North-West.

LETTER XIII.

Camping on the Snow—Winter in the North-West—Cold but Healthy Atmosphere—Land Speculators—How to Encourage Immigration—Territory Equal in Size to Twenty-six States Awaiting Settlement—Enormous Freight Charges—History of the Grasshopper Plague—Imports at Pembina, &c., &c.

We left the Little Saskatchewan on Thursday, 4th October, after a day's, delay on account of a snowstorm that covered the ground to the depth of about three inches—not very pleasant weather for camping out! The road was heavy and slippery; but the mud did not cling with such tenacity to the vehicle as in the Red River valley. For the first few miles we passed through some strips of good timber, and noticed several fresh-water lakes. Towards noon the clouds cleared away and the sun shone out brilliantly; the remnants of the snowstorm disappeared as if by magic, and since my return I have been informed that for two months afterwards the weather was delightful, and that no snow fell till late in the month of December. The snow-fall in the North-West is not as heavy as in Ontario; it scarcely ever exceeds eighteen inches or at most two feet in depth. The snow is not so compact as in Ontario, but light, much drier, and easily removed by animals seeking for grass. Cattle and horses roam out frequently during the winter, picking up the rank natural grasses, and keeping themselves in good condition with but little care or attention on the part of the owner. Sufficient snow falls to preserve the earth and the roots of the trees from the influences of the atmospheric cold, and the internal heat is prevented from escaping. The ploughed lands become pulverized and as mellow as a garden. The winters are steady and uniform and not subject to sudden changes; the atmosphere is bright and exhilarating; there are no fogs, thaws or rain till spring sets in. Then the covering of snow vanishes and the soil is soon ready for the reception of seed. To the north, distant some six or eight miles, is a range of hills, running parallel to the trail known as the Riding Mountains. These mountains are covered with a dense growth of valuable timber down to the southern slope. They extend east and west for thirty or forty miles, diverging somewhat to the north near the Little Saskatchewan. On these mountains and

to the north, large tracts of splended timber can be easily procured for an extensive settlement. On the southern slope there are extensive prairie lands with fine crystal spring water gushing out of the hill, and forming beautiful little rivulets, which flow across the plains. In the evening we passed several primitive dwellings, the nucleus of a flourishing settlement, and arrived at night opposite the splendid stock farm of Mr. Adam Mackenzie, son of Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, the burgomaster of Rat Creek settlement, and camped for the night on the lee side of a small poplar grove. We turned our jaded horses out to grass on a rich natural meadow, on which was cut, cured, and put up in small stacks, 350 or 400 loads of hay, not a particle of which was touched during the night, the horses preferring the sweet, nutritious second-growth grass. Mr Mackenzie has made a capital selection; his farm contains within its limits fine agricultural lands for grain, rich meadows, plenty of timber, and a living stream of water. Next morning we took an early start, with White Mud River on our right, and passed over considerable good land and an extensive wet meadow or muskeg. Crossing White Mud River, we arrived at Palestine about noon. The village contains a grist and saw mill, a general store, hotel, blacksmith shop, and a few scattered private residences. There was evidently in it a lack of enterprise; the village seemed to languish for want of capital. In all probability the proprietors, like many other business men in Manitoba, diverted their capital out of its legitimate channel. With a mania for land none were content unless they could count their thousands of acres, their ruling passion being to become large landed proprietors. The unusually wet season kept back hundreds of settlers, who might have been induced to purchase from these speculators, and the result was that many became "land-poor." The only remedy for this state of things is for the Local Government to tax all lands, whether belonging to residents or non-residents. There is an inherent tendency among property-holders to accumulate, and if encouraged, by unguarded legislation it will work out mischief to the community. The poor, honest settlers should not be defrauded by grasping land sharks, who compel them to pay 300 or 400 per cent. on the original price. The land rightly belongs to the *bona fide* settler, and should never be held by any monopoly. Such monopolies are antagonistic to the development, growth, and prosperity of any new country. A check should be put to this grasping speculation; let our public lands be parcelled out into homesteads, and given to the worthy settler as free as the air we breathe. The poor man is put at the foot of the column, and bled unmercifully before he can get one foot of God's green earth. Great corporations, with unlimited wealth and an identity of interest, have controlled legisla-

tion and managed to get under their control nearly all the arable lands in some of the Western States. The Legislature has not been vigilant enough in providing safeguards for the encouragement and protection of the honest settlers, who are exposed to hardships and privations enough in carving out for themselves homes in isolated positions, without paying $3 or $4 per acre for lands which the speculators procured for 50 cts. The trail led from Palestine over alternate tracts of timber and open prairie, till we arrived at the second crossing of White Mud River at Woodside. We travelled over a rich country, with an occasional settler's dwelling, mostly new arrivals. Late in the evening we reached Westburn, a snug little village, situate at what is known as the first crossing of White Mud River. This embryo village contains two general stores, hotel, church, and several private residences, and may in a few years become a flourishing place. We drove our horses into the rapid stream, which was from three to four feet in depth and about 120 in width, and with considerable difficulty forded it, and reached the opposite bank and camped for the night. Next morning several hungry natives paid us a visit, and we relieved their necessities. The usual road, more particularly during this unusually wet season, was, if travelling to the east, to follow the trail along the west side of the river from Westburn to Totogan, at the south-west corner of Lake Manitoba; crossing the river at that point, and following the high rolling prairie south of Portage La Prairie, I determined to take a near cut across the angle, over a low, wet prairie, saving at least 12 miles' travel. The trail was over rank grass, ponds and morasses for ten or twelve miles, with water often to the hub of our conveyance. Not a tree or shrub was to be seen. Thousands of acres of this rich meadow could be easily drained into White Mud River, and converted into the most productive lands. After crossing Rat Creek, farm houses were seen near the trail, and in the distance the whole country side is partitioned into fields, and under cultivation. It looked more promising, and the signs of industry were more apparent than we had been accustomed to for some months. The country increased in interest as we advanced. Not a solitary settler was located on this broad prairie three years before; now it is studded with houses and barns in every direction for miles. From an eminence near Mr. Wallace's homestead I counted over 300 stacks of hay and grain. Thousands of acres have recently been brought under cultivation, and tens of thousands more are lying waste, ready for the settler. Only labour is necessary to develop these resources. Agriculture forms the basis of production, and it is the bounden duty of those who control the destinies of this great Dominion, to adopt a liberal policy in aid of immigration. Now is our opportunity; while nations in Europe are plunged in war and

bloodshed; while tens of thousands are struggling in misery; we have ample room for many millions. Professor Macoun asserts that we have in the North-West 160,000,000 acres of good agricultural and pastoral lands, and 40,000,000 acres of lake and swamp lands. This great territory is equal to twenty-six States the size of the Province of Manitoba. There are now tens of thousands of Mennonites in Southern Russia dissatisfied with their situation, who are very anxious to remove and join their brethern in Manitoba if any encouragement was given them. Now is the time to take advantage of these circumstances. Those of that class who have become settlers in Manitoba—now numbering over 7,500—are prosperous and happy. They brought with them to the country over half a million dollars in cash, and their personal goods and effects were value for much more. Every settler adds material wealth to the nation. The moment he settles upon our soil he becomes a consumer, and soon a producer; and thereby contributes to the revenue. The development of the North-West by railway communication should be pushed forward at once. The profits that should accrue to farmers are eaten up by enormous freight charges. Wholesome competition by railway would relieve them from this evil. This is certainly the work of the Dominion Government, which holds possession of vast areas of land in the West. The construction of railways has been encouraged in almost every Province out of the Dominion exchequer. Manitoba is yet, comparatively speaking, in its infancy, with an empty treasury, having no revenue from the sale of Crown lands. It is dependent upon the subsidy of $90,000 from the Dominion Government, to defray the expenses of government, public works, education, etc. We cannot expect the Local Government to undertake works of much magnitude; indeed it is questionable whether the above sum is judiciously expended. In travelling through the Province I noticed that many little bridges were swept away by the spring freshets, and were not replaced during the whole season, the settlers being put to great trouble and inconvenience in fording streams, when the legitimate expenditure of a few thousand dollars would have made many roads quite passable. This would have been a source of convenience and accommodation to settlers, and possibly the lack of bridges may have kept back many intending settlers who made vain efforts to examine the country and find an eligible location.

From Poplar Point to Rat Creek the settlers are principally Canadians, with the exception of several half-breed families, who are strung along the Assiniboine, many of whom are anxious to dispose of their properties and remove west to the haunts of the buffalo. Some of these Canadian settlers who located at first on purely prairie lands complained about the scarcity of timber. Most of them

have timber limits of 20 acres a few miles from their homesteads. These settlers had removed from Ontario, being sons of those hardy pioneers who had cleared the forest and carved out homes in the bush by persevering industry and toil. They have now become satisfied that to enter upon a prairie farm is attended with much less toil and labour than to clear away the forest. They can commence to plough at once and keep cattle on the prairies. Many intend to plant trees and thorn fences on and around their respective homesteads. Nothing adds more to the appearance and value of a farm than a few shade trees, giving shelter from the scorching sun and prairie winds. I am not sanguine enough to suppose or assert that every new settler will become rich and prosperous. Some would wither and die if planted in the Garden of Eden, but this I am prepared to say, that every settler blessed with health, by the exercise of thrift, economy and pluck, cannot help improving his condition. Agriculture is an honourable and healthy occupation; the prosperity of any country in a great measure depends upon the husbandman. Some allege, who are not conversant with the circumstances of the case, that distance from market, want of railway facilities, destruction of crops by the ravages of the grasshopper, scarcity of building timber and fuel, are all great drawbacks to the settlement of this country. As a set-off, it may be mentioned that all new settlers have for many years a home market for all their surplus produce; frequently at much better prices than when nearer to market. At Prince Albert wheat was selling at $2.25 per bushel, and all other articles in proportion. We have tangible evidence that produce and hay realized a much higher price in many parts of Muskoka than in Toronto, and will sell much higher 300 miles up the Ottawa than at the capital. And in a few years all these new settlements will enjoy railway facilities for transportation of their surplus produce.

In regard to the grasshopper plague, Manitoba and the North-West are not breeding grounds. The locusts are foreigners, and much more liable to overrun Nebraska, Kansas, Dacotah and Minnesota, than Manitoba. Those States have a higher altitude, are denuded of timber, arid, and subject to summer droughts, and also are more in the direction and more liable to be overrun by these insects. Manitoba had an immunity of 37 years—from 1820 to 1857; not a single grasshopper was in the country during that long period. In 1873, 1874 and 1875, crops were partially destroyed, more particularly in 1874, but none have since appeared, and in all probability may not again for half a century. In reference to the scarcity of timber, there is abundance, if properly protected, and it will increase yearly. In some of the older settlements of Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois, there is now 25 per cent. more than there were when

those states were first settled, and, if encouragement is given to the settler to transplant trees, numbers will of their own accord put out a few acres for shelter, and to embellish their properties. Late at night we arrived at High Bluff, the residence of our fellow-traveller, Mr. W. Moss, whose arrival the following day created quite a sensation. I remained in the Province nearly two weeks after our return from the west, examining the crops, which were all secured and in many cases threshed out. The yield was enormous, tens of thousands of bushels of wheat were ready for market between Poplar Point and Rat Creek, but the state of the roads was such that it was impossible to take half a load to market. The expenditure of a few thousand dollars would greatly improve the navigation of the Assiniboine to this point. The general Government of the United States gave a grant of $10,000 last year for the improvement of the Red River, which was expended in soundings and surveys. Application will be made next session to Congress for a grant of $100,000 for deepening the river at Goose Rapids and other places. The Americans are fully alive to the importance of trade on this noble river. The Red River Transportation Company have seven good steamers and a dozen barges, with a carrying capacity of 3,000 tons. The amount of freight carried inward this season was nearly 18,000 tons and 9,579 passengers. The total imports from all countries last year were $1,876,753; the total exports, $695,970. I may mention the value of a few articles which entered the Custom House at Pembina this season:

Reapers and mowers	$ 24,426
Ploughs and cultivators	11,561
Other agricultural implements	8,023
Horned cattle	118,536
Horses	24,876
Bacon and hams	37,831
Pork	30,675
Sugar	72,487

The population of Manitoba has increased rapidly during the last two years, and there is every prospect of its doubling in the next four years.

I have carefully narrated to your numerous readers the advantages and also the disadvantages of this great portion of the Dominion that came under my observation, telling them about its valleys, rivers, soil, climate, and staple productions, with other subjects of general interest, for the express purpose of informing intending settlers where to find eligible and suitable locations. I have not held out any visionary inducements to any one comfortably settled in Ontario to remove. I have no object to gain, no office to seek, no

lands to sell. I have travelled over the country upwards of 1600 miles with my own equipage, solely at my own expense, uninfluenced by any selfish consideration, and I have endeavoured to give a plain, unvarnished opinion of the country as it presented itself to me. The trip on the whole was pleasant, with the exception of a few days I was detained at Qu'Appelle through sickness, but all travellers must make up their minds to submit to many discomforts. We can appreciate the comforts of civilization much more after our return. I suffered more in pocket than in discomfort, but, should my writings be instrumental in inducing those who are struggling to live in Europe or other parts of the world to settle upon those fertile and rich lands, I shall be amply rewarded for the time and expense I have voluntarily put myself to. I have satisfied myself, and returned with my mind stored with many interesting and pleasant recollections of my travels, and have unbounded faith in the great future of the great North-West.

POSTSCRIPT.

Advice to persons who intend going to Manitoba or North-West Territories.

To the tenant-farmers of Great Britain, I would say, go to Manitoba, for the reason that no country on the face of the globe offers greater inducements for those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Free grants of land are given of inexhaustible fertility; and eligible improved farms in central situations may be purchased for a less amount per acre than the annual rent and other dues on a farm in Great Britain. To farmers in any of the older Provinces of the Dominion, surrounded with all the necessary comforts of life, I would say, remain where you are, provided you have sufficient means to purchase improved farms for your sons in your own locality; or, I may say to these, provide your sons with the necessary outfit and 300 or 400 dollars and send them to Manitoba, if they are of sober and industrious habits. I venture to predict their ultimate success. An industrious man can earn in Manitoba the price of an acre of land daily during the summer months. But the demand for farm labour is limited, and necessarily confined to the summer months. This demand will, however, increase as capital increases, and as the country becomes more developed by railroads and other means of communication. The greater part of all who go to that Province procure a homestead or purchase a piece of land. A very

large proportion of the population consists, therefore, of tillers of the soil. Real estate increases in value yearly. Farm labourers earn from twenty to twenty-five dollars a month, including board. Labourers without board, from $1.50 to $2.00 per day. Female domestic servants in rural districts earn $8.00 per month, and in the city $12.00.

All who intend to go to Manitoba who have limited means should endeavour to make their personal luggage and freight as light and compact as possible. They should take neither furniture nor agricultural implements; such articles can be purchased much cheaper in Winnipeg, when we take into consideration the freight charges, which frequently amount to more than the original cost of the articles before they reach their destination. Intending settlers, however, should take with them a plentiful supply of wearing apparel and bedding, together with articles of domestic use, which can be compactly packed and are of light weight, such as cutlery, dishes, tools, etc.

Good, well-proportioned, serviceable horses, particularly brood mares, may be taken out with advantage, and also sheep. Horned cattle may be brought into the Province from Montana or other parts of the Western United States, where they can be purchased more cheaply than they can be taken from the Eastren Provinces of the Dominion.

Those who take horses and waggons would do well to ship them only as far as Glyndon or Fisher's Landing, as they would be able to drive them much more cheaply the remaning portion of the journey than putting them on board the Red River boats. I especially advise emigrants to pay no attention to runners or interested parties by the way, but inquire for the Government Agent wherever there is opportunity, and place reliance on the information and directions obtained from him. If the emigrant is going to purchase land, he should always examine them before concluding his bargain, and above all he should ascertain that the title is indisputable.

JAMES TROW.

LANDS NOW AVAILABLE FOR SETTLEMENT IN MANITOBA, KEEWATIN AND NORTH-WEST TERRITORY.

The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture having, at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, made an enquiry of the Surveyor General, respecting the lands now actually available in the Province of Manitoba, Keewatin, and North-West Territory, for the purpose of information of the numerous emigrants who are now proceeding to the North-West, the following letter was written to explain the facts:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Surveyor General's Office,

OTTAWA, 6th April, 1878.

SIR,—Referring to our conversation of this morning, I now beg to enclose you the copy of an Order in Council, dated the 9th November last, setting forth the conditions upon which persons will be allowed to settle upon lands reserved for railway purposes in Manitoba.

I may say that the lands so far reserved for railway purposes are those for twenty miles on each side of the main line surveyed for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

It is probable that lands which may be settled on within the Railway Reserve *outside* the Province, so long as they form no part of a Reserve for town plot purposes, such as at Battleford, may, on being included within the Township Surveys, be acquired on the terms of the Order in Council.

With regard to your enquiries as to the lands open for general settlement outside of townships especially reserved for colonization or for half-breeds, I beg to remark that a very large area of desirable lands is open for entry in the several portions of the Province described as follows:

1. The lands on each side of the Canadian Pacific Railway line through the Province not reserved for half-breeds are open for settlement upon the conditions set forth in the Order in Council enclosed.

2. There are a number of townships available to the east and north-east of Emerson.

3. Between the Mennonite Reserve west of the Red River, and the half-breed Reserve to the north, and in the townships within and to the west and south-west of what is known as the Pembina Mountain Settlement.

4. In the vicinity of Palestine and the Beautiful Plain.

5. A very extensive district containing valuable lands for settle-

ment is found in the Little Saskatchewan and Riding Mountain country, being in the Territories from ten to forty miles west of the westerly limits of the Province.

6. The land fronting on the north side of the Rainy River in Keewatin, is of excellent quality, and presents an extensive field for settlement.

It is a wooded country, however, and therefore requires a greater expenditure of labor to bring a given area under cultivation.

In reply to your enquiry as to the position of people who may settle upon unsurveyed lands, I beg to say that in all such cases persons so settling must take their chances of being found on land which may prove to belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, part of the one-twentieth reserved to the said Company by the Deed of Surrender.

In the regular township surveys, section eight and twenty-six represent this one-twentieth, but in the river belts, the Company's proportion will probably be determined by lot.

The Dominion Lands Act provides that when the township surveys may embrace settlements previously formed (on land open at the time for general settlement), such settlers will be confirmed in their several holdings as homesteads, up to the extent of one hundred and sixty acres, in legal subdivisions, including their improvements.

Settlers on land within the limits of the Railway Reserve having taken up the same after the date of the 9th November, 1877, will require to pay for the lands in accordance with the provisions of the Order in Council of that date.

Those persons who may be found settled upon the borders of navigable rivers, such as the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan, outside of the Railway Reserve, will be confirmed in possession of the lands on which they may have settled, provided they conform to such conditions as the Government may have made in respect of the manner in which title for such lands may be acquired.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
L. S. DENNIS,
Surveyor General.

JOHN LOWE, Esq.,
Secretary,
Department of Agriculture
and Immigration, Ottawa.

ORDER IN COUNCIL RESPECTING THE SETTLEMENT OF RAILWAY LANDS.

Copy of a Report of Committee of the Honourable Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 9th November, 1877.

On a report, dated 30th October, 1877, from the Hon. the Minister of the Interior, stating that in consequence of the rapidly increasing demand for lands for settlement in Manitoba, and also of the continued dissatisfaction of the locking up of the lands withdrawn for twenty miles on each side of the line surveyed for the Canadian Pacific Railway by the Order in Council of the 20th December, 1874, he is of opinion that it is expedient to effect some amelioration of the conditions of the said Order in Council so far as relates to the lands within the Province.

He, therefore, recommends that the lands in Manitoba withdrawn as above be thrown open to actual settlement, but not for homestead or pre-emptive entry, or for entry by military bounty or police warrants, or for ordinary sale. No person to be allowed to acquire more than one-half section or 320 acres, and such land to be paid for by the occupant at whatever rate and upon such terms as may be fixed therefor by the Government when the remainder of the lands in the Province, of this class, are disposed of.

He further recommends that persons desiring to acquire such lands shall, previous to settlement thereon, be required to be entered therefor at the nearest Dominion Lands Office, and in order to prove their good faith, the applicants shall be obliged, in each case, to make a payment, in advance, at the time of entry, of one dollar per acre in cash on account of the purchase, and further be required to settle on and commence to cultivate the land within one year from the date of entry, or in default thereof the payment so made to be forfeited.

No scrip of any kind, or military bounty, or police warrants to be receivable in payment of the lands above described.

The Minister observes that the withdrawal of the lands in question was effected under section 105 of the Dominion Lands Act, circumstances not permitting the application thereto of the Act, 37 Vic. cap. 14, which provides for the construction of the railway, and as no statute exists authorizing the special mode above suggested of disposing of the lands withdrawn, it will be advisable to confirm the action proposed to be taken as above in that respect by legislation during the ensuing session of Parliament.

The Committee concur in the foregoing Report, and recommend that the same be approved and acted on

Certified.

(Signed,) W. A. HIMSWORTH, C. P. C.

ANALYSIS OF MANITOBA SOIL.

As bearing on the particular advantages of Manitoba, for the cultivation of wheat, the following analysis of a specimen of the alluvial soil from the prairie of the Province of Manitoba is given. It is by Professor V. Emmerling, Director of the Chemical Laboratory of the Agricultural Association of the University of Kiel, Holstein, Germany:—

(Translation of Letter to Senator Emil Klotz.)

"KIEL, 29th April, 1872.

"HON. SENATOR:

"The analysis of the Manitoba soil is now completed, and the result is in 100,000 parts:—

Potash	228 7
Sodium	33 8
Phosphoric Acid	69 4
Lime	682 6
Magnesia	16 1
Nitrogen	486 1

"Yours truly,

(Signed,) "V. EMMERLING."

(Extract from Letter of Senator Emil Klotz to Jacob E. Klotz, agent for the Dominion Government.)

"KIEL, 4th May, 1872.

"After considerable delay, I succeeded in obtaining the analysis of the Manitoba soil from Professor Emmerling, Director of the Chemical Laboratory of the Agricultural Association of this place, and hope it may be of service to you. Annexed I give you our analysis of the most productive soil in Holstein, whereby you will see how exceedingly rich the productive qualities of the Manitoba soil are, and which fully explains the fact that the land in Manitoba is so very fertile, even without manure.

"The chief nutrients are, first, nitrogen, then potash and phosphoric acid, which predominates there; but what is of particular importance is the lime contained in the soil, whereby the nitrogen is set free, and ready to be absorbed in vegetable organisms. The latter property is defective in many soils, and when it is found defective recourse must be had to artificial means by putting lime or marl (a clay which contains much lime) upon the same.

"According to the analysis of the Manitoba soil, there is no doubt

that to the farmer who desires to select for his future home a country which has the most productive soil, and promises the richest harvest, no country in the world offers greater attractions than the Province of Manitoba, in the Dominion of Canada.

"*Analysis of the Holstein Soil and Manitoba Soil compared:*

	Holstein Soil	Excess of Properties of Manitoba Soil.
Potash.....	30	198 7
Sodium.....	50	13 8
Phosphoric Acid	40	29 4
Lime.....	130	552 6
Magnesia.....	10	6 1
Nitrogen.....	40	446 1

The facts above stated sufficiently account for the popular experience of the remarkable production of wheat in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. SHANTZ ON MANITOBA.

BEST TIME TO GO AND WHAT CAPITAL TO COMMENCE WITH.

Mr. Jacob Y. Shantz, of Berlin, Ontario, who wrote in 1873, at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, a narrative of his visit with a Mennonite deputation, gives the following opinion as to the best time for the settler to go to Manitoba, and the amount of capital on which he may begin:

THE BEST TIME FOR THE SETTLER TO GO.

The settler should, if possible, be on his land by the 1st of June, when he would be in time to plant a patch of potatoes which will grow in an ordinary season when ploughed under a prairie sod. The ploughing for the next spring's crop should be done in June or July, when the sap is in the roots of the grass; being turned over at this season of the year, it will dry up and the sod will rot, so that the ground will be in proper order for receiving and growing crops in the following spring.

WHAT CAPITAL IS NECESSARY WITH WHICH TO COMMENCE.

This is a question frequently asked—the answer depends entirely upon surrounding circumstances. A young man without family,

willing to work and save, would secure himself a home in a few years, provided he had only ten dollars to pay the fees for a free grant homestead claim.* Work is to be had at high wages, and he could work for other parties part of the time, and then hire help again in turn to assist in putting up a small homestead house. After that he could plough and fence in a few acres for a crop in the following spring. The next year he could earn enough to buy a yoke of oxen and other cattle, and thus, in a short time, he might become comparatively an independent farmer. A settler with a family ought to have provisions for one year (or the wherewithal to procure them).

Such a one, desiring to start comfortably, should have the following articles, or the means to purchase them, viz :

One yoke of oxen.....	$120 00
One waggon.....	80 00
Plough and harrow	25 00
Chains, axes, shovels, etc	30 00
Stoves, beds, etc	60 00
House and stable, say.....	150 00
Total.....	$465 00

A person having $800 or $1,000 can, if he wishes to carry on farming on a large scale, purchase another quarter section in addition to his free grant, when he will have a farm of three hundred and twenty acres of land for cultivation, and in addition can cut all the hay he wants in the marshes, if he thinks it desirable.

In conclusion, I would remark that a poor man can adopt the mode of farming on a small scale for the commencement, as practised by the half-breeds. They have carts made of two wheels and a straight axle, with two poles fastened on the axle to form shafts, and a rack or box thereon. To a cart so made is hitched one ox. The cart costs about ten dollars, and the ox and harness $50 to $60. With such a vehicle a man can do all the teaming that is required on a small farm—and after the first ploughing *one ox* can plough all that is required.

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* In respect to work it should be borne in mind that while wages are high, the country is new, and the labour market therefore limited. Mechanics especially should take special information before they start. The Pacific Railway works will, of course, call for a good many men; and the progress of agricultural settlement will pave the way for many kinds of artisans.

DOMINION LANDS ACT.

The following is a summary of the Dominion Lands Act:

An Act was passed in 1874 (35 Vic. cap. 23, 37 Vic. cap. 19) amending and consolidating the laws and Orders in Council respecting the public lands of the Dominion, and was further amended last Session, 39 Vic. cap. 19.

The administration and management is effected through a Branch of the Department of the Minister of the Interior, known as "*the Dominion Lands Office.*"

The surveys divide the lands into quadrilateral townships, containing 36 sections of one mile square in each, together with road allowances of one chain and fifty links in width, between all townships and sections.

Each section of 640 acres is divided into half sections of 320 acres. All townships and lots are rectangular. To facilitate the descriptions for Letters Patent of less than a half quarter section, the quarter sections composing every section in accordance with the boundaries of the same, as planted or placed in the original survey, shall be supposed to be divided into quarter sections, or 40 acres. The area of any legal subdivision in Letters Patent shall be held to be more or less, and shall, in each case, be represented by the exact quantity as given to such subdivision in the original survey; provided that nothing in the Act shall be construed to prevent the lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, surrendered by the Indians to the late Earl of Selkirk, from being laid out in such manner as may be necessary in order to carry out the clause of the Act to prevent fractional sections or lands bordering on any rivers, lake, or other water course or public road from being divided; or such lands from being laid out in lots of any certain frontage and depth, in such manner as may appear desirable; or to prevent the subdivision of sections, or other legal subdivisions into wood lots; or from describing the said lands upon the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, or such subdivisions of wood lots, for patent, by numbers according to a plan of record, or by metes and bounds, or by both, as may seem expedient.

PRICE OF DOMINION LANDS.

Unappropriated Dominion lands may at present be purchased at the rate of $1 per acre; but no purchase of more than a section, or 640 acres, shall be made by the same person. Payments of purchases to be made in cash. The Minister of the Interior may, however, from time to time, reserve tracts of land, as he may deem

expedient, for Town or Village plots, such lots to be sold either by private sale, and for such price as he may see fit, or at public auction. The Governor in Council may set apart lands for other public purposes, such as sites of market places, jails, court houses, places of public worship, burying grounds, schools, benevolent institutions, squares, and for other like public purposes.

FREE GRANTS AND HOMESTEAD RIGHTS.

Free grants of quarter sections, 160 acres, are made to any male or female who is the head of a family, or to any male not the head of a family who has attained the age of 18 years, on condition of three years' settlement, from the time of entering upon possession. A person entering for a homestead may also enter the adjoining quarter section, if vacant, as a pre-emption right, and enter into immediate possession thereof, and on fulfilling the conditions of his homestead, may obtain a patent for his pre-emption right on payment for the same at the rate of one dollar per acre. When two or more persons have settled on, and seek to obtain a title to, the same land, the homestead right shall be in him who made the first settlement. If both have made improvements, a division of the land may be ordered in such manner as may preserve to the said parties their several improvements.

Questions as to the homestead right arising between different settlers shall be investigated by the Local Agent of the division in which the land is situate, whose report shall be referred to the Minister of the Interior for decision.

Every person claiming a homestead right from actual settlement must file his application for such claim with the Local Agent, previously to such settlement, if in surveyed lands; if in unsurveyed lands, within three months after such land shall have been surveyed.

No patent will be granted for land till the expiration of three years from the time of entering into possession of it.

When both parents die without having devised the land, and leave a child or children under age, it shall be lawful for the executors (if any) of the last surviving parent, or the guardian of such child or children, with the approval of a Judge of a Superior Court of the Province or Territory in which the lands lie, to sell the lands for the benefit of the infant or infants, but for no other purpose; and the purchaser in such a case shall acquire the homestead right by such purchase, and on carrying out the unperformed conditions of such right, shall receive a patent for the land, upon payment of the office fees, $10.

The title to lands shall remain in the Crown until the issue of the patent therefor, and such lands shall not be liable to be taken in execution before the issue of the patent.

If a settler voluntarily relinquishes his claim, or has been absent from the land entered by him for more than six months in any one year, then the right to such land shall be forfeited.

A patent may be obtained by any person before three years, on payment of price at the date of entry, and making proof of settlement and cultivation for not less than 12 months from date of entry.

All assignments and transfers of homestead rights before the issue of the patent shall be null and void, but shall be deemed evidence of abandonment of the right.

These provisions apply only to homesteads and not to lands set apart as timber lands, or to those on which coal or minerals, at the time of entry, are known to exist.

GRAZING LANDS.

Unoccupied Dominion lands may be leased to neighbouring settlers for grazing purposes; but such lease shall contain a condition making such land liable for settlement or for sale at any time during the term of such lease, without compensation, save by a proportionate deduction of rent, and a further condition by which, on a notice of two years, the Minister of the Interior may cancel the lease at any time during the term.

Unoccupied Dominion lands will be leased to neighbouring settlers for the purpose of cutting hay thereon, but not to the hindrance of the sale and settement thereof.

MINING LANDS.

As respects mining lands, no reservations of gold, silver, iron, copper or other mines or minerals will be inserted in any patent from the Crown, granting any portion of the Dominion lands. Any person may explore for mines or minerals on any of the Dominion public lands, surveyed or unsurveyed, and, subject to certain provisions, may purchase the same. As respects coal lands, they cannot be taken for homesteads.

TIMBER LANDS.

Provisions are made in the Act for disposing of the timber lands so as to benefit the greatest possible number of settlers, and to prevent any petty monopoly. In the subdivison of townships, consisting partly of prairie and partly of timber land, such of the sections as contain islands, belts or other tracts of timber, may be subdivided into such number of wood lots of not less than ten and not more than twenty acres in each lot, as will afford one such wood lot to each quarter section prairie farm in such township.

The Local Agent, as settlers apply for homestead rights in a township, shall, if required, apportion to each quarter section one of the adjacent wood lots, which shall be paid for by the applicant at the rate of $1.00 per acre. When the claimant has fulfilled all requirements of the Act, a patent will issue to him for such wood lot.

Any homestead claimant who, previous to the issue of the patent, shall sell any of the timber on his claim, or on the wood-lot appertaining to his claim, to saw-mill proprietors, or to any other than settlers for their own private use, shall be guilty of a trespass and may be prosecuted therefor, and shall forfeit his claim absolutely.

The word *timber* includes all lumber, and all products of timber, including firewood or bark.

The right of cutting timber shall be put up at a bonus per square mile, varying according to the situation and value of the limit, and sold to the highest bidder by competition, either by tender or by public auction.

The purchaser shall receive a lease for 21 years, granting the right of cutting timber on the land, with the following conditions: To erect a saw mill or mills in connection with such limit or lease, of a capacity to cut at the rate of 1,000 feet broad measure in 24 hours, for every two and a half square miles of limits in the lease, or to establish such other manufactory of wooden goods, the equivalent of such mill or mills, and the lessee to work the limit within two years from the date thereof, and during each succeeding year of the term;

To take from every tree he cuts down all the timber fit for use, and manufacture the same into swan lumber or some other saleable product;

To prevent all unnecessary destruction of growing timber on the part of his men, and to prevent the origin and spread of fires;

To make monthly returns to Government of the quantity sold or disposed of—of all sawn lumber, timber, cordwood, bark, etc., and the price and value thereof;

To pay, in addition to the bonus, an annual ground-rent of $2.00 per square mile, and, further, a royalty of 5 per cent. on his monthly account;

To keep correct books, and submit the same for the inspection of the collector of dues whenever required.

The lease shall be subject to forfeiture for infraction of any of the conditions to which it is subject, or for any fraudulent turn.

The lessee who faithfully carries out these conditions shall have the refusal of the same limits, if not required for settlement, for a further term not exceeding 21 years, on payment of the same amount of bonus per square mile as was paid originally, and on such

lessee agreeing to such conditions, and to pay such other rates as may be determined on for such second term.

The standard measure used in the surveys of the Dominion is the English measure of length.

Dues to the Crown are to bear interest, and to be a lien on timber, cut on limits. Such timber may be seized and sold in payment.

Any person cutting timber without authority on any Dominion lands, shall, in addition to the loss of his labour and disbursements, forfeit a sum exceeding $3 for each tree he is proved to have cut down. Timber seized, as forfeited, shall be deemed to be condemned in default of owner claiming it within one month.

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR A HOMESTEAD RIGHT.

I, of do hereby apply to be entered, under the provisions of the *Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion* for quarter sections numbers and forming part of section number of the Township of containing acres, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof.

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CLAIM FOR HOMESTEAD RIGHT.

I, A. B., do solemnly swear (or affirm, as the case may be), that I am over 18 years of age; that I have not previously obtained a homestead under the provisions of the "*Dominion Lands Act*"; that the land in question belongs to the class open for homestead entry; that there is no person residing or having improvements thereon; and that my application is made for my exclusive use and benefit, and with the intention to reside upon and cultivate the said land—So help me God.

On making this affidavit and filing it with the Local Agent, and on payment to him of an office fee of ten dollars, he shall be permitted to enter the land specified in the application.

COLONIZATION.

If any person or persons undertake to settle any of the public lands of the Dominion free of expense to the Government, in the proportion of one family to each alternate quarter section, or not less than sixty-four families in any township, under the Homestead provisions of the Act hereby amended, the Governor in Council may withdraw any such township from public sale and general settlement and may, if he thinks proper, having reference to the settlement so effected and to the expense incurred by such person or

persons in procuring the same, order the sale of any other and additional lands in such township to such person or persons at a reduced price, and may make all necessary conditions and agreements for carrying the same into effect.

The expenses, or any part thereof, incurred by any person or persons, for the passage money or subsistence in bringing out an immigrant, or for aid in erecting buildings on the homestead, or in providing farm implements or seed for such immigrant, may, if so agreed upon by the parties, be made a charge on the homestead of such immigrant, and, in case of such immigrant attempting to evade such liability by obtaining a homestead entry outside of the land withdrawn under the provision of the next preceding section, then, and in such case, the expense incurred on behalf of such immigrant, as above, shall become a charge on the homestead so entered, which, with interest thereon, must be satisfied before a patent shall issue for the land; provided as follows:

(*a.*) That the sum or sums charged for the passage money and subsistence of such immigrant shall not be in excess of the actual cost of the same as proved to the satisfaction of the Minister of the Interior;

(*b.*) That an acknowledgment by such immigrant of the debt so incurred shall have been filed in the Dominion Lands Office;

(*c.*) That, in no case, shall the charge for principal moneys advanced against such homestead exceed in amount the sum of two hundred dollars;

(*d.*) That no greater rate of interest than six per cent. per annum shall be charged on the debt so incurred by such immigrant.

FOREST TREE CULTURE.

Any person, male or female, being a subject of Her Majesty by birth or naturalization, and having attained the age of eighteen years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter-section or less quantity of unappropriated Dominion lands as a claim for forest tree planting.

Application for such entry shall be made in the forms prescribed in the Dominion Lands Act, which may be obtained from the local agent, and the person applying shall pay at the time of applying an office fee of ten dollars, for which he or she shall receive a receipt and also a certificate of entry, and shall thereupon be entitled to enter into possession of the land.

No patent shall issue for the land so entered until the expiration of six years from the date of entering into possession thereof; and any assignment of such land shall be null and void, unless permis-

sion to make the same shall have been previously obtained from the Minister of the Interior.

At the expiration of six years the person who obtained the entry, or, if not living, his or her legal representative or assigns, shall receive a patent for the land so entered, on proof to the satisfaction of the Local Agent, as follows :—

1. That eight acres of the land entered had been broken and prepared for tree planting within one year after entry, an equal quantity during the second year, and sixteen additional acres within the third year after such date ;

2. That eight acres of the land entered had been planted with forest trees during the second year, an equal quantity during the third year, and sixteen additional acres within four years from the date of entry, the trees so planted not being less than twelve feet apart each way;

3. That the above area, that is to say, one-fifth of the land, has, for the last two years of the term, been planted with timber, and that the latter has been regularly and well cultivated and protected from the time of planting. The entry of a quarter section for pre-emption in connection with homestead may be substituted in whole or part for tree planting.

LAND SCRIP AND RESERVES.

Col. Dennis, the Surveyor-General gave the following statements in evidence before the Immigration and Colonization Committee, in the session of 1877 :—

There are three kinds of scrip :—

1. The certificates issued to soldiers for military services performed to the Dominion—in other words, military bounty land warrants.

2. Similar certificates are issued by the authority of law for services rendered to the Government in the North-West Mounted Police.

These two certificates, if located by the owner, may only be entered in quarter sections of land, 160 acres intact.

A number of these warrants, however, may be acquired by any individual, and may be used to pay for land in the same way as cash.

Both military and police warrants may be purchased and are assignable, and whoever holds them for the time being, under a proper form of assignment, can exercise full ownership over them either in the locating or paying for land; but the first assignment from the soldier or policeman, as the case may be, must be endorsed on the back of the warrant.

No affidavit is necessary where the assignment is endorsed, but the execution of the assignment must be witnessed either by a Commissioner for taking affidavits or by a justice of the peace.

Any subsequent assignment may be upon a separate paper, but must be regularly attested before a Commissioner, and accompany the warrant in its transmission to the Land Office.

3. The third kind of scrip is that issued to the half-breed heads of families and to old settlers in the Province, under recent Acts.

A claim against the Government for lands may, by law, be committed by an issue of scrip which would be in form similar to that issued to the half-breed heads of families and old settlers before mentioned.

This scrip is a personalty, and there is no assignment thereof necessary to transfer the ownership. The bearer for the time being is held to be the owner, and we accept it in the Dominion Lands Office, in payment for Dominion lands, the same as cash.

The Surveyor-General stated further, in answer to a question, that land scrip cannot be used in payment of the half-breeds' claims; and explained that the land set apart for half breeds, under the Manitoba Act, was an absolute grant to the children. The extent to which lands belonging to minors will be tied up will depend greatly upon whether steps be taken to appoint trustees who would be able to make sales, or upon such other measure as the Government might see fit to adopt, with the view of bringing these lands into the market.

The only other Reserves in the Province are those of the Mennonites, which are rapidly filling up. There is still a very considerable extent of excellent land in the Province now available for settlement, but it can easily be understood the people who have been going into the Province for the last four or five years have selected the most favourable locations, and, consequently, the most of the good land in those localities have been taken up. The lands remaining, although generally desirable, are not so conveniently situated.

Col. Dennis further stated in answer to questions: The Province of Manitoba contains nearly nine millions of acres.

The Railway Reserve contains about 1,900,000 acres, and the Mennonite townships about 500,000 acres.

The Hudson's Bay Company's one-twentieth contains about 430,000 acres.

There are granted for school purposes two whole sections, or 1,280 acres, being sections 11 and 29 in each township, which are, by law, dedicated throughout the whole North-West for educational purposes, and the grant amounts, in Manitoba, to 400,000 acres.

In Manitoba the greatest quantity of land available for settlement is in the west and south-west.

Miles of railway located in the Province are about 155; the main line of the Canada Pacific Railway about 77, and the Pembina Branch abut 81 miles.

Road allowances are laid out on the ground in the townships in Manitoba, which correspond to concessions and side roads in Ontario and Quebec. Each section or square mile there is surrounded by an avenue of 99 feet, or a chain and a half, in width, resulting in a magnificent dedication to the public for highways.

Q. Are any of the lands fronting on the main river in Manitoba available for settlement?—None, with the exception of lands on the Assiniboine River, above Prairie Portage. As a rule, the lands on the Red River and Assiniboine River were laid out and settled upon, previous to the transfer, in narrow frontages, running back two miles, called the "Settlement Belt," and the township lands available for sale and settlement lie outside of this Belt. There are many unoccupied lots in the Settlement Belt, but people are not allowed to enter them, as they are considered to possess a special value. The intention is, shortly, to offer the unoccupied lots belonging to the Government, in the Settlement Belt, at public auction, at an upset price, with conditions of actual settlement upon the land.

FARES AND TRANSPORT OF EMIGRANTS.

(*The following Rates are for the Season of* 1878.)

From Toronto or Hamilton via the Lakes and Duluth to Winnipeg:

1st Class.....	$42 50
2nd or Emigrant Class.....	21 00

From Sarnia, Goderich, Kincardine, Southampton or Windsor to Winnipeg:

1st Class.....	$40 00
2nd or Emigrant Class.....	20 00

Weight of Emigrants' baggage allowed, 150 lbs.

Emigrants' effects by the car load:

From Brockville to Fisher's Landing, one car, $200; at this rate a span of horses would cost about $35; or one horse and a cow about $17.50 each. They might be driven from Fisher's Landing to Winnipeg.

From Toronto or Hamilton to Winnipeg, one car, $260.

From Sarnia, Windsor, Goderich, Kincardine and Southampton to Winnipeg, one car, $245.

Special arrangements have been made by the Grand Trunk Company for emigrants going to Winnipeg in parties. To obtain the benefit of such arrangements special application should be made in the case of each party. This may be done either directly or through any of the Dominion Immigration Agents.

Special rates will be granted over the Intercolonial and Grand Trunk Railways to emigrants for Manitoba or parts of the North-West, on the order of any of the Dominion Agents, at the rate of 1d. a mile to Toronto, where the special rates above quoted to Winnipeg begin.

DOMINION GOVERNMENT AGENTS TO WHOM APPLICATION MAY BE MADE.

Halifax, N.S.....E. Clay.
St. John, N.B.....R. Shives.
Quebec (City).....L. Stafford.
Montreal.....J. J. Daley.
Sherbrooke, E.T.....H. Hubbard.
Ottawa.....W. J. Wills.
Toronto.....J. A. Donaldson.
Hamilton.....John Smith.
London (Ont.).....A. G. Smythe.

AT DULUTH,

During the season of navigation, a special agent is placed, Mr. W. B. Grahame. He will be in attendance on the arrival of all steamers, to assist emigrants in the bonding of their baggage, and otherwise to give them information.

☞ All emigrants should be implicity guided by his disinterested official advice, in preference to listening to persons whom they do not know, who may have interest to deceive them.

AGENTS IN MANITOBA.

Dufferin.....J. E. Tetu.
Winnipeg.....W. Hespeler.

The agents will give emigrants all possible information and advice.

Emigrants may obtain from them directions how to go about getting their lands.

SPECIAL CAUTION TO SETTLERS.

It may save a great deal of trouble if immigrants will be careful not to settle on sections 8 and 26, these being Hudson Bay Lands; or on sections 11 and 29, these being school lands. The Dominion Lands Act specially sets aside these reserves; and they are not open to the public

Date Due

MAR 28 1972			
MAY 5 1972			
APR [illegible] 1974			
DEC 15 1976			
JUN 30 1983			
MAR 16 1992			
MAR 12 1992			

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